PS2 ONLINE WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW BEFORE YOU CONNECT

PSM

■ australian ■ issue #017

2004's Biggest Games

DRIVER 3
FINAL FANTASY X-2
GHOST RECON: JS

Summer's Hottest Names

REVIEWED!

PRINCE OF PERSIA
BEYOND GOOD & EVIL
LORD OF THE RINGS
RATCHET & CLANK
SMACKDOWN!
WRC3
SSX3

INTERVIEWS

DRIVER 3
CRICKET 2004
FINAL FANTASY X-2

PREVIEWED

TONY HAWK'S UNDERGROUND
TRUE CRIME STREETS OF LA

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next GAMING

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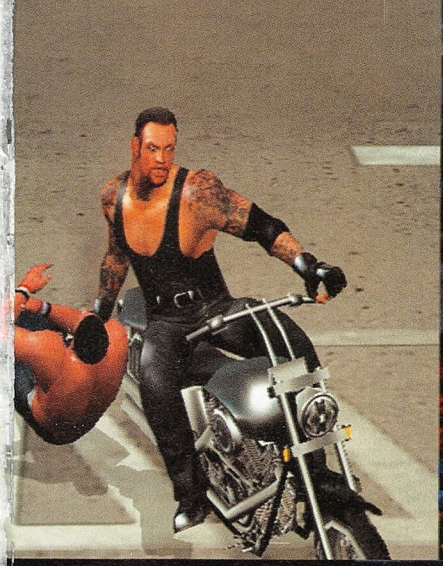
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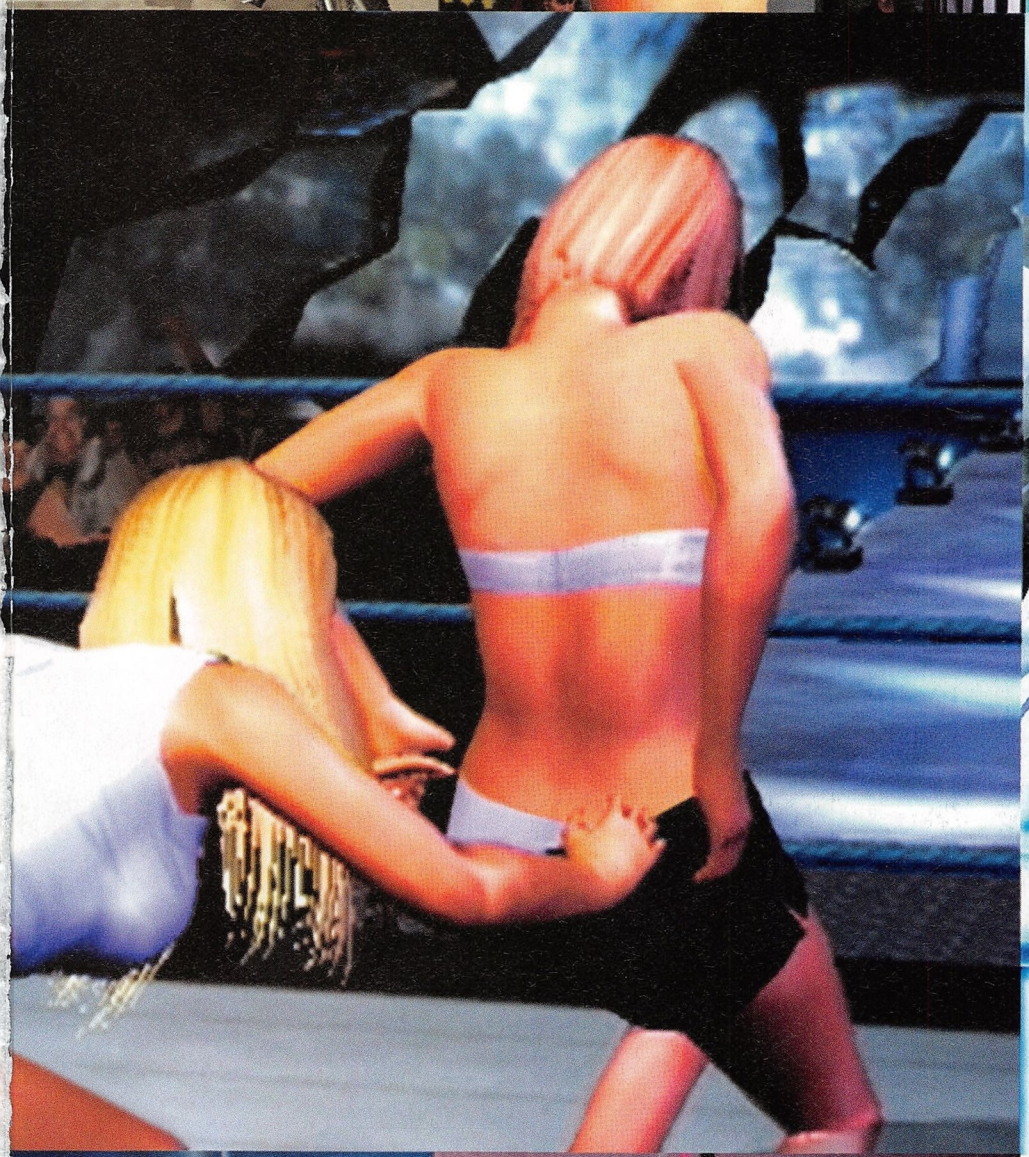
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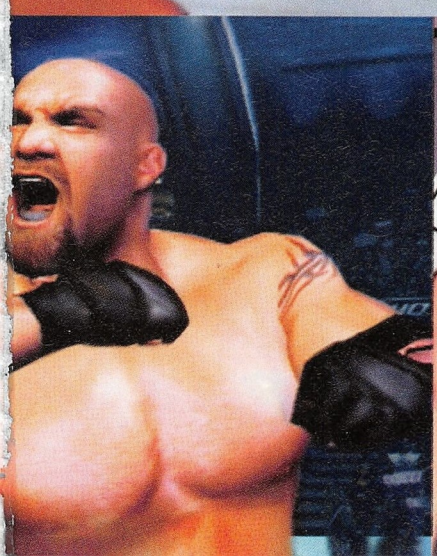




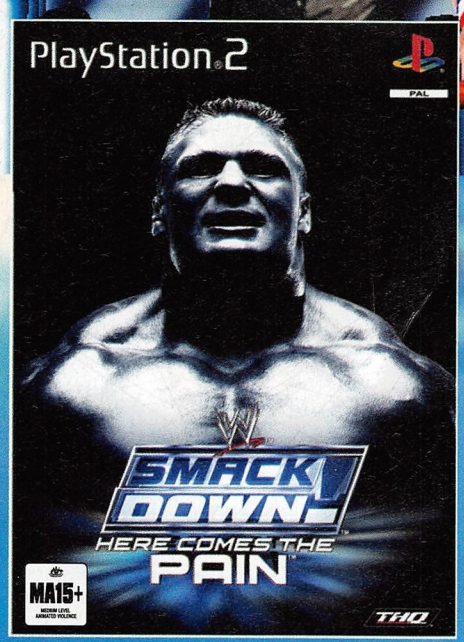












MA15+
MEDIUM LEVEL
ANIMATED VIOLENCE

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PSW WELCOME

EDITORIAL

AND SO, FOR THE FIRST TIME THIS YEAR, WE'RE hitting Christmas. A chance to spend some time with the family. Maybe play some games. *Pro Evo 3* probably. Certainly, as the publishers, with their inevitable mountain of new releases know, spend some dosh. But also an opportunity to reflect. The PlayStation 2 has been out for what feels like years, and it's beginning to show its age. As E3 this year indicated, the hardware is now limiting developers' capabilities, and while we're reaching a general level of software refinement of a scale we've never seen before in gaming (the number of 8+ games this issue must be close to a dozen) there is perhaps not so much now to get excited about as there once was. Is it a mid-life crisis of large proportion? In a way, yes.

What can be done? We can start looking forward. To the PlayStation 3. To the PSP. To the weekend. In 2004 there's *Gran Turismo*. *Resident Evil*. *Splinter Cell*. *Killzone*. *Tiger Woods PGA Tour 2005* (with PAL online capabilities intact). Great titles, all will undoubtedly be, but nothing that offers the kind of eye-opening promise, potential, progression at which we gamers cream our pants. It's nice to see the PS2 scene moving though, even if it's not exactly technologically forward. The arrival of the online this month will spice things up considerably. Moving sideways is better than not moving at all.

Fortunately, all that shit about enjoying the journey actually rings true. It's easy to lose track of what games are about – fun. And you'd be torturing yourself if you let middle-aged depression get in the way of the great titles we've had reviewed this issue. That's right, don't go buying that force feedback steering wheel just yet. The near future may look a little bleak, but at least the present can delay its arrival.

And while with magazine lead times it's always difficult to bring the definitive Christmas review catalogue, we've tried this month to get you as much info as possible for the crucial Christmas shopping period. It has caused a delayed deadline with resulting frowns from the production department, but we've managed to squeeze in as much as possible about those titles that will be on or around your Xmas shopping list. Indeed, the presence of more than half-a-dozen A-standard titles this month has demanded a stricter usage of our must-buy sticker, for the benefit of your wallet. And that, at least on paper, should shed any crisis tag.

So while the life of the PS2, from a dedicated gamer's perspective, is certainly past its climax, we'll still be feeding off some tasty scraps for at least two Christmases after this one. We've hit dessert, and it's sweet, but definitely not as filling as the main, or even that nice seafood entre platter you gorged yourself on at the start of the meal. It's times like these it's just better to forget about your troubles and switch on your PS2. Denial? Five minutes into *Prince of Persia* and it won't matter.

/ JACKSON GOTHE-SNAPE

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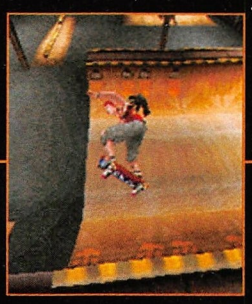
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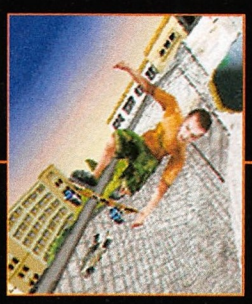
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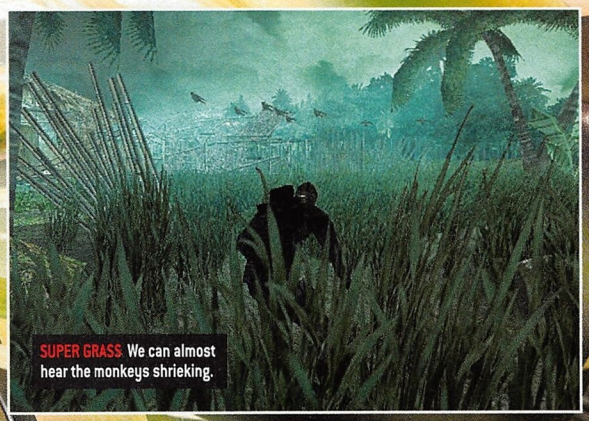
G ACTIVISION NEVERSOFT idea WORKS3D!

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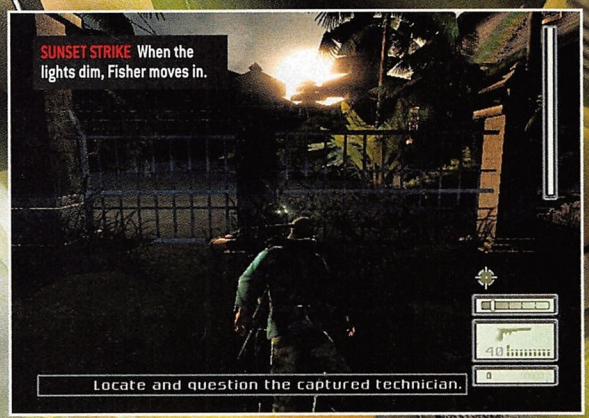
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SUPER GRASS We can almost hear the monkeys shrieking.



SUNSET STRIKE When the lights dim, Fisher moves in.



GIRDER YOUR LOINS Let's hope nobody's under there.

FISHER, MAN

PANDORA'S BOX OF DELIGHTS

SPLINTER CELL'S SAM FISHER IS BACK ANOTHER GAME OF HIDE-AND-SNEAK.

SOLID SNAKE IS IN HIDING. HE'S JUST SEEN THE TRAILER FOR *Pandora Tomorrow* on this month's *PSW* DVD, and suddenly he's not feeling so cocky. Those of you who've already felt the full force of our explosive footage will understand why. Because it would seem that for the first time in his life, Snake's position is in serious jeopardy. Fisher's back, and this time he's not pissing around.

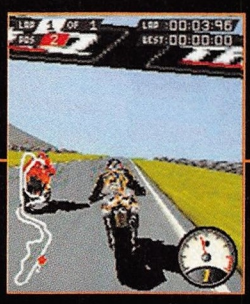
Most worrying for Snake is the first glimpse of *Pandora Tomorrow*'s mission-based Multiplayer mode, in which multiple Sam Fisher look-alikes scrap over who looks cooler in black and who looks the least stupid with those oversized goggles strapped to their forehead. Oh, and you probably sneak around in the shadows a bit and shoot each other too. New moves spotted include Sam hanging upside down from a beam by his legs so he's still able to shoot, and *The Matrix*-style gallop up a wall to do a backflip, presumably so he lands behind a pursuing enemy.

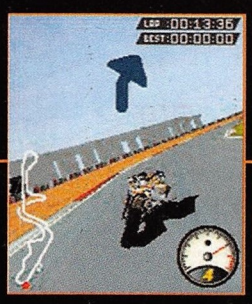
Think about multiplayer *Splinter Cell* for long enough and it sounds potentially fascinating. Imagine something like a *Metal Gear Solid*-style military installation with multiple Solid Snakes running round, intent on taking out the other side. You won't be able to play as Fisher, though; that's reserved for the single-player missions. We have a feeling that multiplayer might suit cowardly shits who prefer to sit tight in the shadows and wait for that one opportunity to cap an opponent. Ubisoft hasn't confirmed the exact modes yet, but we reckon there's potential for some neat spins on the usual selection. Capture The Flag to become Capture The Hostage, anyone? Actually, that's the only one we can think of.

At present it's unclear whether *Pandora Tomorrow* is to be a full-blown follow-on to *Splinter Cell* or more of a semi-sequel in the same way that *SSX Tricky* was to the original *SSX*. In all honesty, it hardly matters. The presence of an all-new Single-player campaign set half in the jungle, half in the piss-stained slums of Indonesia is more than enough to get our juices flowing.

Pandora Tomorrow should be sliding into the welcoming crevice of your PS2 in March of 2004. Stay with us for progress reports.

This is where
I saw Pete's skid marks.





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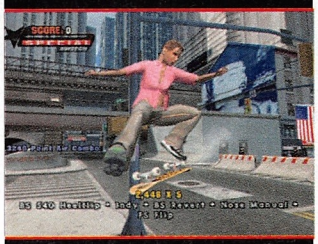
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THQ WIRELESS

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PSW'S 10 MOST WANTED



1. TONY HAWK'S UNDERGROUND
It's really hard and we want to touch it right now, but mummy Activision says we're not allowed. Not until next month anyway. Still, abstinence makes the prong grow longer.

2. LORD OF THE RINGS: ROTK
Our heads have been inflated to basketball size this month by a thin wind of hype blown at us from internet movie sites. Like a pregnant porn star, we're top-heavy and expectant.

3. DRIVER 3
Carried up seven places on the shoulders of 10 pages this issue. Tanner has never looked so good, and we're a wee bit taken.

4. MAXIMO 2
How much do we want to play *Maximo 2*? Roughly twice as much as you'd like to see Ian Hewitson riding in the 3.40 at Flemington on a donkey named Huey, Do You Remember Me?

5. RESIDENT EVIL: OUTBREAK
All this online talk makes up plenty excited for some Raccoon action. One of the few titles that promises something more than a tacked-on online mode.

6. TRUE CRIME: STREETS OF LA
We're still excited about this one, just not as excited as we were when it was encased in the glass of early development and we weren't able to play it.

7. GRAN TURISMO 4
Polyphony – you don't write, you don't answer the phone, you don't send us flowers, you don't respond to our bomb-threats. So you're in seventh place. You've made us do this.

8. METAL GEAR SOLID 3
(Whispers) Is anyone else concerned that *Snake Eater* might just turn out to be a tiny bit, like, rubbish? If we wanted to catch wild animals we'd go wombat baiting with our mate Kerry.

9. GHOST RECON: JS
The *JS* above stands for *Jungle Storm*. It's just that we didn't have space to write *Jungle Storm*, so we had to abbreviate it. Only once we'd had a meeting to discuss it, obviously.

10. KILLZONE
It remains just a small mountain of speculation, but we're still planting a flag bearing the inscription '*PSW* said this would be good before anyone else did' at *Killzone*'s summit.





STAR STRUCK

GALACTICA GETS BATTLE STARS

OLD-SCHOOL CELEBS FLOCK TO VOICE **BATTLESTAR GALACTICA** AS IT CRUISES ON PS2.

WE'VE GOT OUR HANDS ON THE FIRST PLAYABLE VERSION of space shooter *Battlestar Galactica*, and we've discovered that there's a throng of crazy voice talent doing the acting. Although the strategic blaster is set 40 years before the time of the TV show, several of the original cast members have returned to do voice work. As well as Dirk Benedict, who played a Han Solo-esque space pilot in the original series, the game also features the vocal talents of Dwight Schultz – AKA 'Howling' Mad Murdoch. That's half the *A-Team*, folks. It might be harder getting the whole team back together though, what with George 'Hannibal' Peppard being nine years dead and all. Still, in the realm of video games, you never know. OK, so this time you do. Kristanna Loken, *Terminator 3*'s T-X, provides a bit more up-to-date voice-mongering as a female space jockey.

It's been an odd year for the sci-fi series that nobody really remembers. First *Usual Suspects* director Bryan Singer was going to turn it into an all-new TV series, but couldn't, and then it surfaced as a 're-imagined' telly show with a female lead. Sadly, there's no news on whether a film version will ever get the all-important greenlight, so fans may have to turn to the PS2 title as the only way to get an 'authentic' slice of the series. *Battlestar Galactica* is out at the end of November.





BEYOND OUR KEN

HADO-RYUKEN!

GIVE US SOME SUGAR BABY – IT'S **HYPER STREET FIGHTER 2**.

FIFTEEN YEARS AFTER ITS DEBUT ON home consoles, Capcom has decided the time (or the profit margin) is right to bring an anniversary edition to the PS2 early next year. Back in the early 90s, we would have defied anyone to go into any amusement arcade or sixth-form college in the country and not find a *Street Fighter 2* machine. Such is the game's popularity that it has sold over 27 million copies worldwide, and scientists have said that if you put them end to end, they'd probably stretch round the world, like, twice or something.

This collector's special will include all the characters who've ever appeared in the zillions of versions of *Street Fighter 2* games, as well as all the different moves. What does this mean exactly? Well, a super combo from *Street Fighter 2 X*'s Ryu might counter a rapid light kick from *SF2*'s Ryu, that's what.

Blinkered video games nostalgia is dangerous, we tell you, but in this case an exception might well have to be made. *HSF2* be out at the end of the year in Japan, so we're expecting the Australian version to arrive around mid-2004.



AAAH LOVELY Ken's dragon punch... a thing of beaty.



S.O.C.O.O.L.

SEAL OF APPROVAL

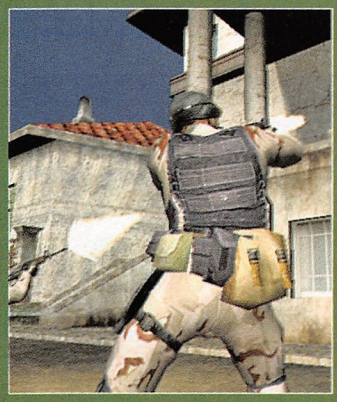
YOUR PS2 IS SET FOR ANOTHER EAR-BASHING THANKS TO **SOCOM 2.**

LIKE A BUSTY BOOTH BABE HIRED AT A game show to draw jaded journalists to a stand, *SOCOM*'s voice-activated headset for bawling instructions to team mates was a novelty attraction, the appeal of which vanished without trace after a couple of hours in its company. Coupled with an ultra-stinky Single-player mode, it was a classic case of a missed opportunity.

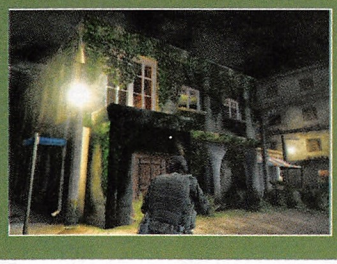
Once again you lead a four-man SEAL team over 12 new missions against the most despicable terrorists countries such as Albania, Brazil and Russia have to offer. There's a better balance of indoor and outdoor levels this time around, with a ship, a jungle stronghold, and a desert cave fortress taking advantage of some new weather conditions and day and night effects. Help comes from the UK's SAS, as well as the Russian Spetznaz, though if the enemy's accuracy from a distance of two yards is anything like it was in the first game, they won't be seeing much action.

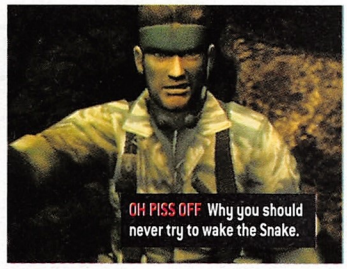
Far better is the Multiplayer mode, which again supports up to 16 players and sports two new self-explanatory modes called VIP escort and Breach. Ten out of the 12 online maps from the original have been updated too, joining a dozen brand new ones for a total of 22.

The original just about worked because it was the first proper online combat game. But things are changing rapidly and we're now seeing more and more military-based shooters promising near enough the same thing. *SOCOM 2* stands up to be counted early next year, but will it stand out anymore?









OH PISS OFF Why you should never try to wake the Snake.

SOLID SNAKE TRASHES TOKYO

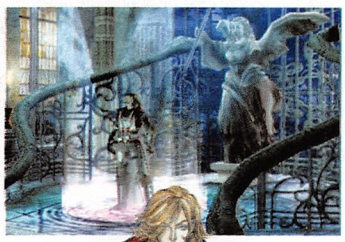
METAL GEAR MADNESS IN THE FAR EAST AS SNAKE GETS BIG IN JAPAN

KONAMI WOWED VISITORS TO THIS YEAR'S Tokyo Games Show with the first showing outside of London of the latest *Metal Gear Solid 3* trailer. The five-minute teaser, last seen at the UK trade show ECTS back in August, offers action fans their most in-depth look yet at what they can expect from *Snake Eater*, a jungle-based stealth 'em up that takes the basic principles of the *Metal Gear* series so far (noise is bad, strangling is good) and smothers it 100% pure Rambo juice. *PSW* is pleased to offer you your own copy of the footage to study at your leisure. So if you haven't already done so, we'll excuse you a second while you commandeer the closest DVD player to go and take a look. And make sure you've got the volume turned right up. The Shirley Bassey-esque soundtrack is one of the funniest things you'll hear this month (NOTE: this statement was calculated using data taken from a really boring person who doesn't usually hear much funny stuff over the course of the average calendar month). Unfortunately, Konami is keeping its powder dry when it comes to releasing exact gameplay details at present, so revelations are thin on the ground this month. Never you mind. You just kick back and get your teeth into that trailer while we scour the world looking to unearth yet more exclusive info. We'll get back to you in four weeks.



PINK POUNDER Ask the nice armoured man to help you.





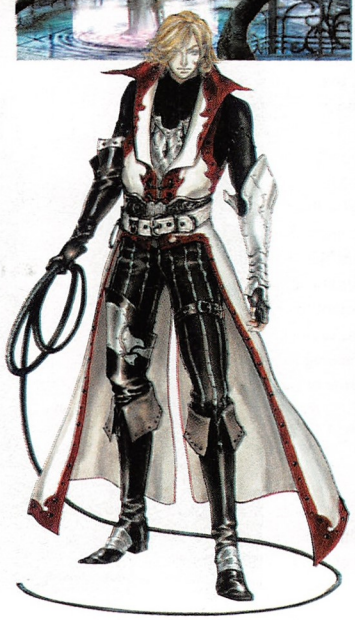
OUT FOR THE COUNT

FANGS FOR THE MEMORIES

SEE HOW IT ALL BEGAN IN THIS **CASTLEVANIA** PREQUEL.

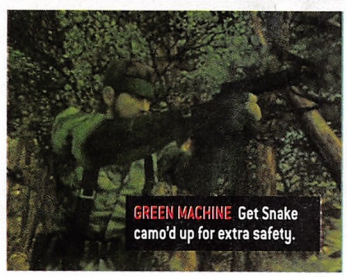
WE'VE FINALLY SEEN JUST HOW GOOD *Castlevania: Lament of Innocence* is. Armed with just a dagger to begin with, it's not long before you're fully whipped up and head off to explore five areas of Drac's abode: the cathedral, theatre, alchemist lab, garden and dungeon. Might not sound like a lot now, but when you're exploring the hundreds of rooms without a map you'll see how huge this game is.

Traps and monsters flood just about every room and corridor, so it's not long before the whip on its own becomes ineffective. Combine it with five sub-weapons such as holy water, or mix seven orbs with ten action relics and you have some powerful attacks. *Castlevania* is now due early next year, and with a few niggles ironed out before then, might well do justice to 17 years of gaming history.



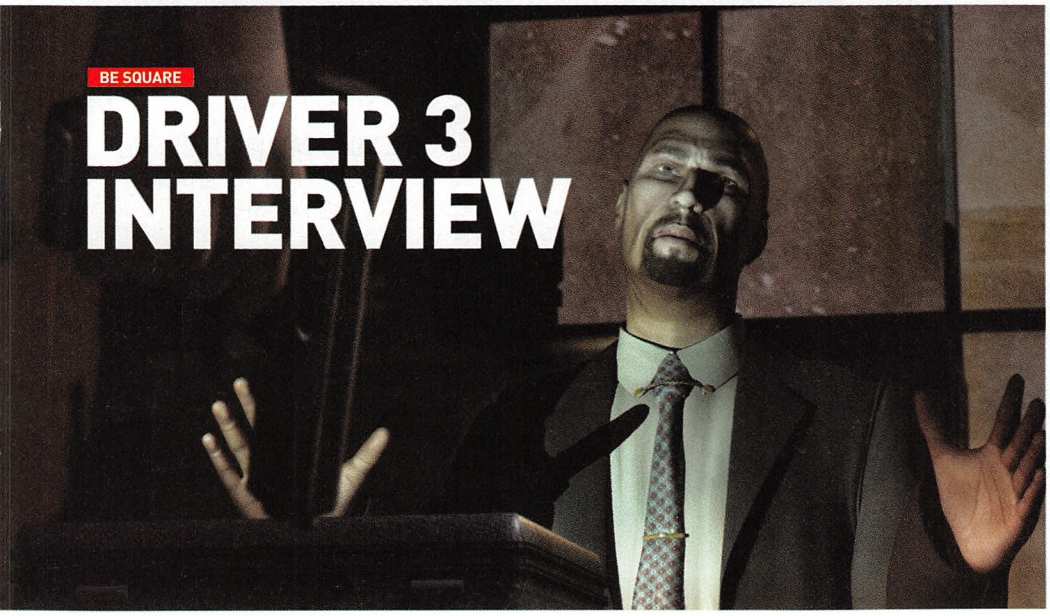


CROC AND BULLET Check out the natty disguise. We love it.



GREEN MACHINE Get Snake camo'd up for extra safety.

"DRIVER 3 IS **NOT** ABOUT SNEAKING AROUND A ROOM, PICKING OFF A GUY WITH ONE BULLET"



BE SQUARE

DRIVER 3 INTERVIEW

WITH MARTIN EDMUNDSON, MANAGING DIRECTOR, REFLECTIONS.

PSW: *Driver 3*, do the hard sell, what are you trying to achieve?

MARTIN: Are you familiar with *Driver 1* and *Driver 2*?

PSW: Yes.

MARTIN: What we've aimed to do with *Driver 3* is to maintain the spirit of *Driver 1* and *Driver 2*. If there was one line that sums up *Driver*, it's: the most accurate possible simulation of Hollywood and TV car chases. The likes of *French Connection*, *Bullet*, the original Ryan O'Neil film *Driver*, modern ones like *Ronin*, and so on. So that's the main thrust of the game. We've carried over some elements of the *Stuntman* physics engine – not the game engine, not the rendering engine, but the physics engine to give it that realism: the way the cars handle, the way the cars slide. The damage and destruction involved in the car side of things is carried over as well.

The new stuff is that Tanner [the main character] can get in out of the car and steal other cars – as he could in *Driver 2* obviously – but he's now armed with a range of weapons that are based in reality – the likes of handguns, pump action shotguns, machine guns, the little mini mach-10s and mini Uzis and so on. Our aim is to carry the level of destruction and the fun element of the driving sections over to the on-foot sections. So *Driver 3* is not about sneaking around a room, picking off a guy with one bullet, and you've only got three or four bullets left so you have to conserve them.

PSW: So it's not *Metal Gear Driver*?

MARTIN: [Chuckles] It's more like – the idea is really, you walk into a room and you just spray the place with bullets. It's all about destruction.

PSW: So you can go into buildings as well?

MARTIN: Yes, you can go into buildings. It's a huge game – there are three cities. Tanner goes back to Miami (obviously the first game was set there), and now Nice in Southern France and Istanbul, Turkey in *Driver 3*. The total size of the environment you can play in across all three cities is about 150 miles of road, so it's huge – and that doesn't include back alleyways and so on that are not marked on the map, so it's actually considerably higher than that. And there are around 30,000 different buildings in the game, so the play area is massive.

The basic story is that you're trying to infiltrate a gang of car thieves. And these car thieves are stealing the cars and moving them through Europe. So you infiltrate the gang – the whole idea is that you have to gain the trust so you start doing missions for them. Because it's car stealing it obviously involves a lot of car-based missions.

PSW: What's the ratio of driving to on-foot missions?

MARTIN: It's very strongly in favour of driving missions. It's roughly two-thirds to three-quarters driving, and a quarter running around. It's very important to realise that *Driver* is a driving game – it's not a walking game, it's not even a shooting game, it's not a simulation, it's not a stealth game, it's a driving game. The reason why we have to have him getting out of cars into other cars and why we have him shooting is that it expands the range of missions that are possible to us. And also, there's only a certain amount of things you can do with a car – you have to at least give him some greater range of possibilities. Plus the other thing- the original idea behind *Driver* was to create the most living, breathing city that we could do at the time on PlayStation 1, so you could just sit there and watch the world go by – cars stopping at traffic lights and so on – and this was a long time ago when we did that on PlayStation 1. And we want to carry that on, make the city more believable and more realistic and so on. To enable us to that we have to have Tanner be able to get out and walk around.

PSW: Obvious comparison. *GTA Vice City* almost seems a homage to *Driver* with its Miami setting. What are your thoughts of *GTA3*?

MARTIN: I think *Vice City* is great, I don't think it's really similar to *Driver* – *Driver* is a car chase game – it always has been - and you'd never call *Vice City* a car chase game. The driving elements of *Vice City* are a means of getting from one place to another rather than being the most fun part. The most fun parts of *GTA* are when you get out of the car and start causing mayhem with the guns and son on. There's not much to say about *Vice City* that hasn't already been said. The only reason it



LIPOSUCTION But look at the light on those cheeks!

gets compared is because it gets lumped into this overall genre of driving/action, as does *Getaway*, and as will probably *True Crime* – because it involves elements of cars (and getting out of them), but none of those games – including *Getaway* and *True Crime* are actual simulations of car chases.

PSW: *Stuntman* – great but flawed game. What did you learn during development and how has that affected *Driver 3*.

MARTIN: We learned a lot. The development of *Stuntman* was actually a learning process with the Playstation 2. Rather than just sit and mess around with the machines and the development of the game – technically we learned a heck of a lot. The Playstation 2 turned out to be a far more complicated machine to get much out of than we thought – well that anybody thought. I think that anybody that tells you that it was a breeze isn't telling you the truth. It's a very complicated machine. We're starting to now see some incredibly special stuff coming out on the PS2, but it's taken a long time. We've got now to the stage that when you look at a PS2 game at one of the many trade shows, you have to look at the controller to check whether it's PS2 or Xbox because the resolution is starting to become very high and at 60 Hz and so on.

We developed *Stuntman* and we developed the physics engine for *Stuntman* over many years, and what it taught us was when we came to *Driver 3* from a technical point of view we had to scrap the rendering engine from *Stuntman*, because the performance analysers came out from Sony, so we were able to look at *Stuntman* and see all the things we had done wrong – but that we didn't know we were doing wrong, because you can't really see inside the machine properly.

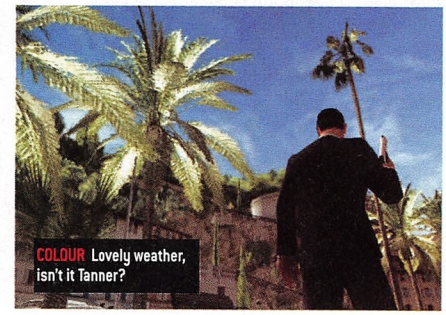
From a gameplay point of view what it taught us was that *Stuntman* was basically too difficult. I think it was – well, definitely it was too difficult – I don't really have any complaints about the structure of the game. *Stuntman* really split people: they either thought it was the greatest thing ever, or they thought it was the worst thing ever. And I think it has to do with your mentality. The people that enjoyed it, enjoyed how absolutely in your face – bang! bang! bang! – all the action was, and then you got to see the theatrical trailer, and the action, and how the trailers were. The replays just looked so filmic, and probably some of the best replays you'd ever seen, because they were designed to be like that. The people that hated the game didn't like how rigid it was, and the fact that they had to do exactly as they were told – every few seconds there's a guy barking orders at you – so it depends on your mentality really. And it did split people: we had so many 9s and 10s out of 10 and so many 2s and 3s out of 10 – I've never seen anything like it. But we're okay with it because I'd rather get that than everybody say 'it's okay...'. But we've certainly learnt not to make the game so difficult. It was a bit like the garage/carpark thing in *Driver 1*. We put it in there, we could do it in 23/24 seconds, so we thought 'that's fine'. The problem was, we played it a thousand times, and you give it to somebody else and it's far too difficult, and *Stuntman* was just too difficult.

PSW: *Driver 3* – okay, focus is on driving. What's the new physics engine like – what did you go for? What can *Driver 2* fans expect from *Driver 3*?

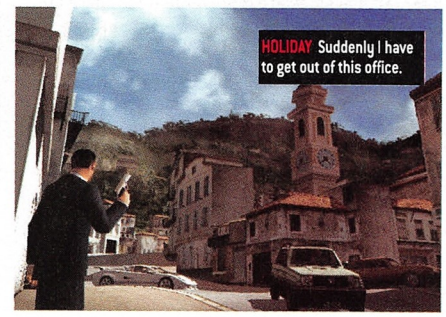
MARTIN: Well, the physics engine was taken across [from *Stuntman*] as I said before, but it's also been enhanced and optimised, in terms of – it can handle a lot more stuff. One of the problems with *Stuntman* was framerate at certain times. You'd go smashing through tables and chairs and the way they'd all react to each other and tables actually hitting into chairs - it's been optimised so that we can have a lot more of that stuff without slowing the game down. It'll have the same kind of themes, but to a greater extent – so a lot more destruction. It's also a lot more realistic in that the panels on the cars now crumple before they fall off. They used to fall off on *Stuntman* – and so we'd model the chassis and the subframe, then we'd have the shell of the car on top of it, and in *Stuntman* the car would tumble and these pieces would fall off. They now crumple properly and it actually buckles the car, so if you hit something at an angle, you get this angled crumple that never happened in *Driver* or *Driver 2* or *Stuntman*. The feel is very similar to Driver – so anybody who's used to Driver or Stuntman – you know, the feeling of the cars, the way that you slide, the handbrake, the burnouts, the donuts – it's all there.



ROUGH BASTARD You know, he's got a tat and shit.



COLOUR Lovely weather, isn't it Tanner?



HOLIDAY Suddenly I have to get out of this office.

PSW: As far the driving engine, the physics – how realistic is it? Any anecdotes from development of the driving engine?

MARTIN: It's a very accurate simulation/physics model, but what we then do is tweak out some of the realism to give you effects that are desirable rather than realistic. For example, the car will naturally under-steer, but what we want is we want to be able to get 'round the bend without having to use the handbrake, so what we do is we'll artificially play with the co-efficient to friction on the rear wheels, so that when you go 'round the bend, depending on how hard you turn it and how long you turn it for, the back-end will start coming 'round to give you that real back-end out sort of slide. It's not like an arcade model, like *Ridge Racer* for example – where car has a pole in the middle of it and you go 'round the bend and it slides artificially, and then back in again. It's nothing like that, but we tweak real physics to get that kind of effect. The advantage that gives us is that it still looks and feels right because it's based on a real physics model rather than being something that the program is saying 'just rotate the car'.

PSW: How tricky is it to implement a good physics model?

MARTIN: We spend a lot of time on it, yeah. We spend a lot of time tweaking it so that it feels right, but so it also looks right if you have an external camera, and you're flinging the car around doing donuts. The thing that we're after – as I said the main thrust of the game – is the most realistic car chases from movies possible, and you have to get it looking like that, and you look at it. It's very easy to tell, on a game when the handling model is an arcade-style handling model – it just doesn't look quite right, it has a strange twist to the cars, the way they rotate. That's obviously not what we want.

We worked really hard with on the physics: so that the handling is predictable, and you don't really think about it, and you're not struggling with the car from the onset. You can ultimately learn how to handle a car, no matter how bad the handling is in the game because you just get used to it.

PSW: Good Shit.

MARTIN: Fucken A, it's good shit right here. Tell that Jackson muthafu**a that he owes me big time for that party wid all those bitches and hos and all that crystal meth. And that *PSW* mag, yeah, Candy digs it, aiiight?

PSW: Sure thing, niggah.

MARTIN: Peace.

PSW: [Nods]. Peace.
/MARCH STEPNIK

380 AINT BAD

CRICKET 2004 INTERVIEW

PSW CALLS TO CRICKET 2004 PRODUCER ANDREW WILSON FOR A QUICK SINGLE.

PSW: The previous game was 2 years ago, *Cricket 2002*. What's changed in the interim?

AW: Our main focus in *Cricket 2004* is to create a strong interactive element in the action, more interactive than in any previous cricket titles but also to introduce some management elements. The modern game of cricket is as much about the data and stats as wickets and our goal is to bridge the gap between the action and the stats. We're treading a line between the immediate action of traditional cricket games and also the management style.

PSW: Is the game in the familiar television broadcast style?

AW: Sure, that's how we balanced the stats and charts with the actual play – by using the natural downtime in cricket.

PSW: Is *Cricket 2004* limited to international matches?

AW: One of the important things we've done is represent the entire scope of cricket. Teams can tour the sub-continent, England, South Africa and play tests or one-day matches. So each of the international sides are represented. But there are also the Australian state squads and English county sides. Teams and players are officially licensed so we've got a really authentic representation of the current game. You can even create your own custom teams, so the range in gameplay is huge.

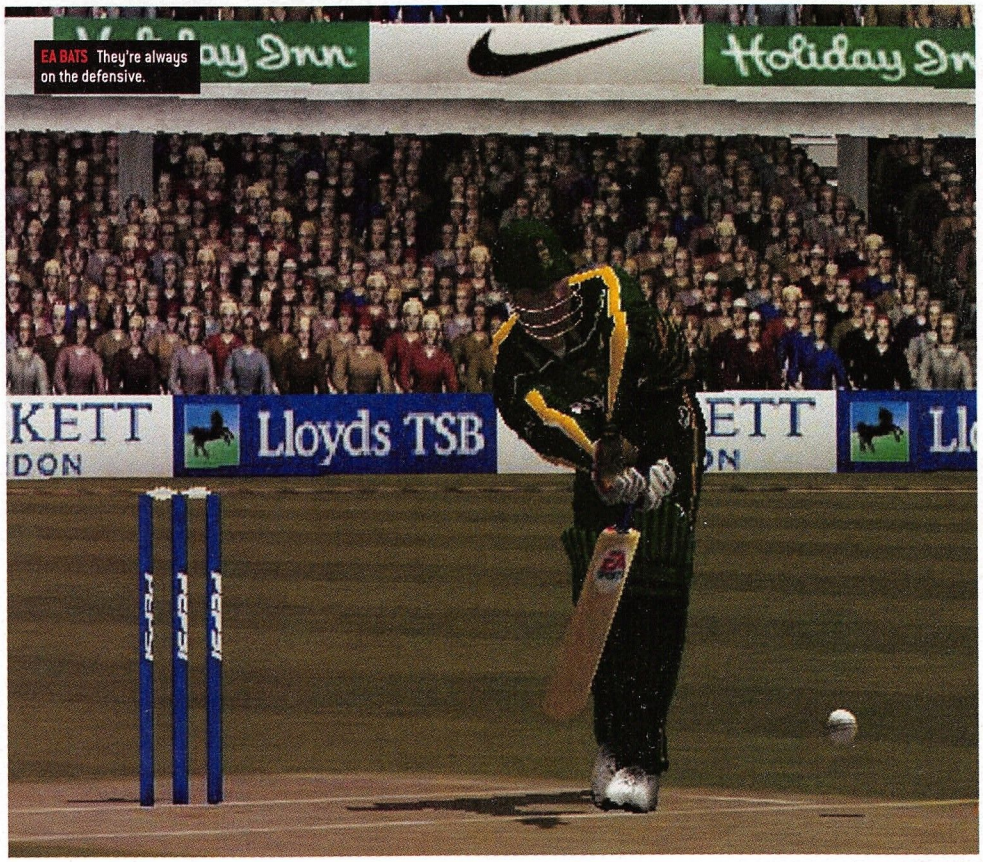
PSW: What about specific gameplay modes?

AW: Apart from entire matches, there will be an objective mode where certain elements can be unlocked. These will involve specific tasks, either time frames, or score targets, that kind of thing.

PSW: How detailed will commentary be in the game?

AW: We've had Richie Benaud, Jim Maxwell and Clive Lloyd in the studio recently, recording upwards of 500 pages of scripted dialogue - that's an improvement over the previous title. That's a week of recording for the guys. I think this will be the finest commentary in a cricket game yet.

PSW: So many titles are going for cross-platform distribution. Why has EA chosen PS2 exclusively for *Cricket 2004*?

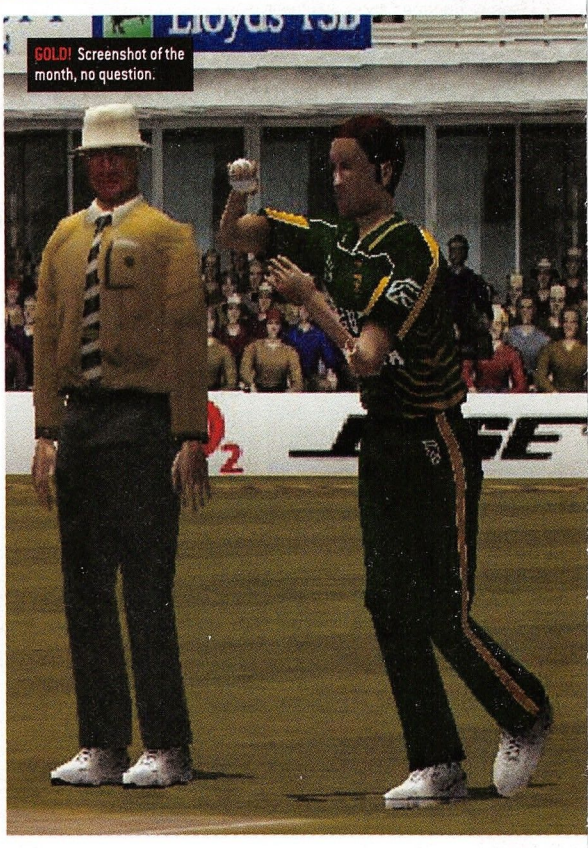


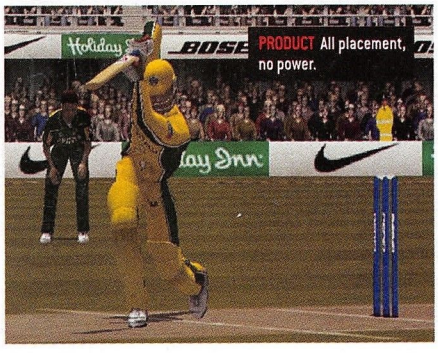
EA BATS They're always on the defensive.

AW: There are marketing issues here but more to the point we wanted to offer a solid experience for core fans of cricket. That happens to be a PS2 market. If we can concentrate on making a really strong title on one system, rather than spending time and money porting the game, then that's a win for everyone.

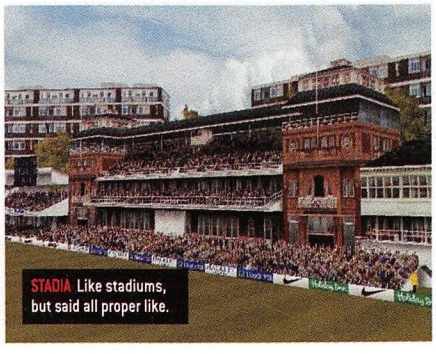
PSW: We're seeing some early code today, what are some of the finer points in balance that you'll be pursuing from here?

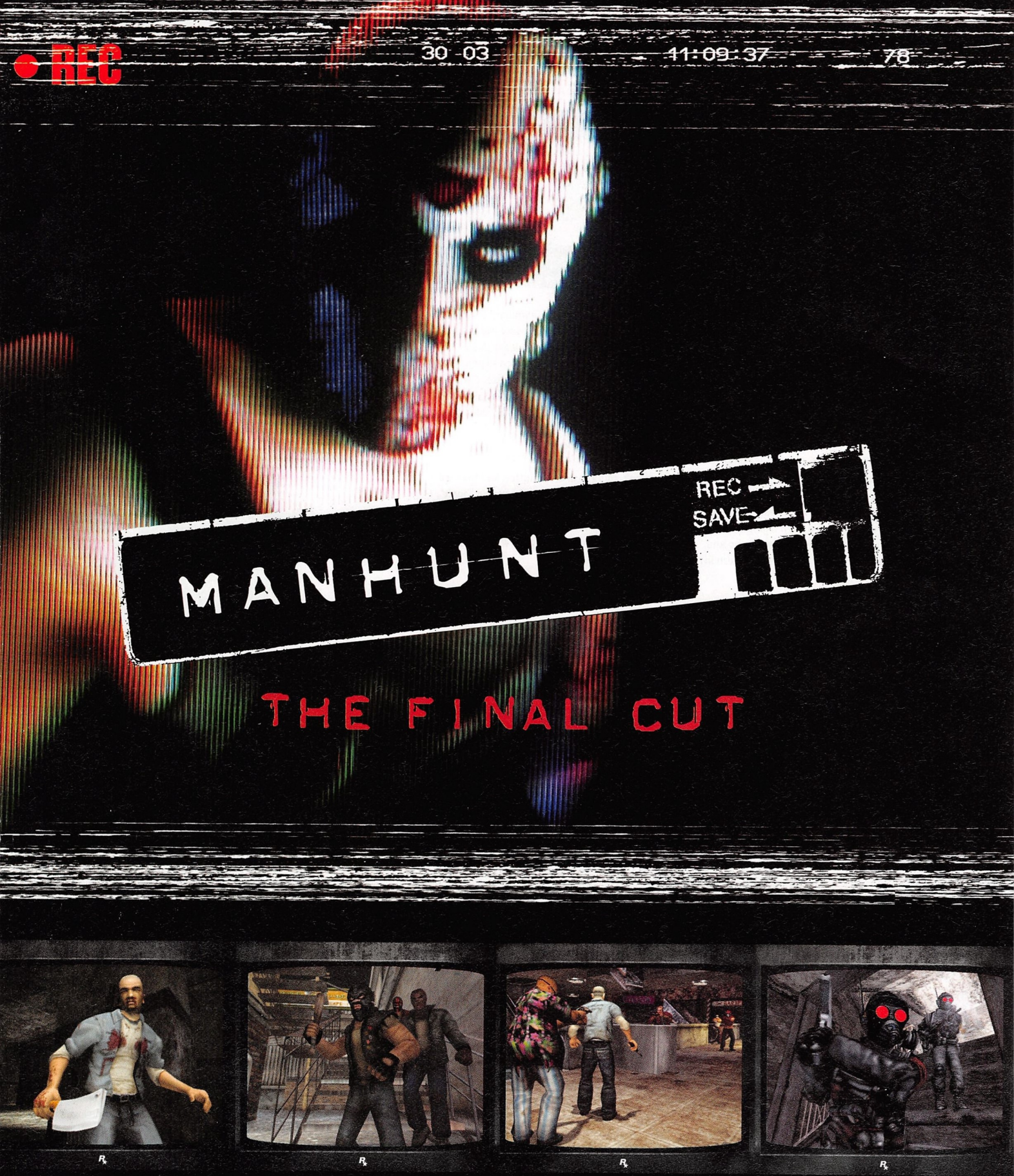
AW: We're balancing as we go. One of the things we're looking at is the possibility of altering the pace between test matches and one dayers. There's the issue of a slower, almost real time game, versus a faster arcade experience. We want to present the game as closely as possible, so these are the elements we're looking to simulate.


GOLD! Screenshot of the month, no question.



PRODUCT All placement, no power.


STADIA Like stadiums, but said all proper like.



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PlayStation.2

MA15+

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DIALOGUE

THE PART OF THE MAGAZINE YOU WRITE, THEN WE TYPE IT UP IN THE CONDUIT ITC FONT AND PUBLISH IT ALL.

I'M ICELANDIC

Bring back Solutions man I luv them nearly as much as I luv ur magazine and can u please give a preview of *Final Fantasy X-2*. Thanx.
James Kyprianos, via email

P.S. I'm Greek.

We sent March and Vanessa over to Japan to preview *FFX-2* as soon as we received your email! Hope you enjoyed the pretty cover image as well. Regarding Solutions though, we've had to prioritise for the past few issues. As things heat up for summer, we've been trying to cram in as much new release reviews, previews and news as possible. Expect Solutions to return in 2004.

HIT THE ROAD JAK

Too much wandering. Camera problems. Occasional Slowdown. These were the terms used when reviewing *Jak II: Renegade*. But hold your horses! Weren't these three of many flaws in *GTA Vice City*, the game that got 10/10 while *Jak II*, which is infinitely superior to *Jak and Daxter*, only got 8/10?. Did you not pay attention to the fact you can nick vehicles to shorten your travel times and you can go on a hoverboard anywhere?

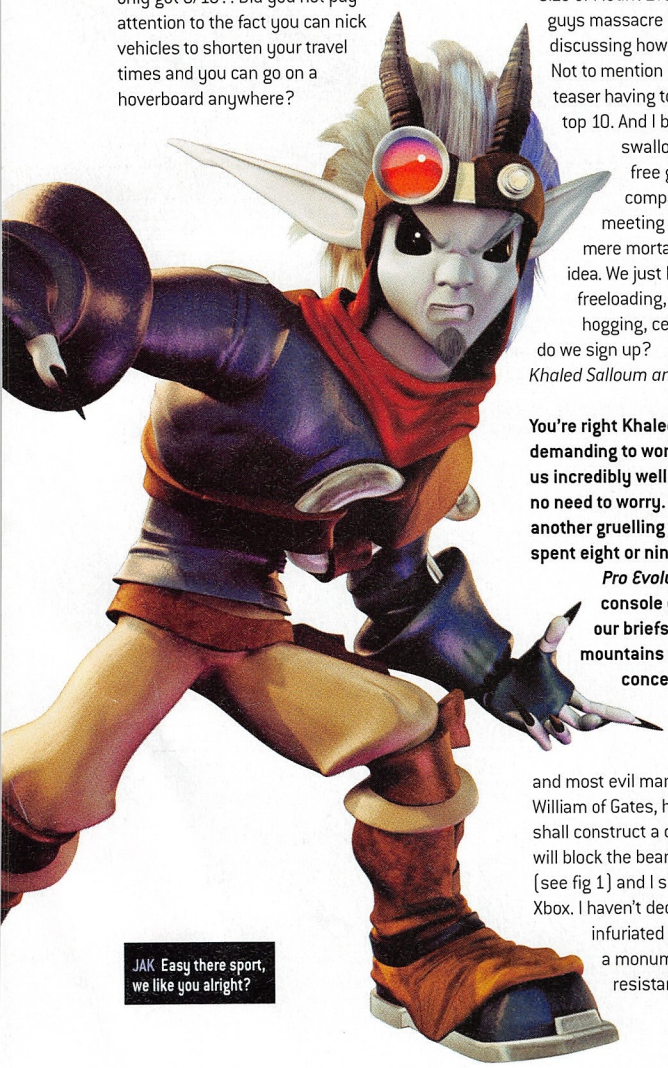
You did the same thing with *Onimusha 2*, which deserved more than its predecessor. More consistency in the review staff please. Also, I don't like when you give letter space to people who say, "I like <insert buxom girl here>." What happened to rewarding inspired writing like mine? And why is it when people say "don't print this", you always do?
Ben Smallman, via email

We weren't going to use this letter. And then we got to the bit where you used the words "don't", "this" and "print" in the same sentence. After that, it had to go in. Why? Because we're like that. And you're wrong about *Jak II*. Why? Just because.

WE FEEL YOUR PAIN

It has come to our attention that you guys are suffering. The hell you guys must endure on a daily basis to provide us with *PSW* must be almost intolerable. The calorie loss must be intensely exhausting from sitting on your arses every day. Playing free games and ordering fast food, your dialling fingers must have blisters the size of Mount Everest. And the brain cells you guys massacre by spending countless hours discussing how good a game is, I mean wow! Not to mention it must be an extreme brain teaser having to be forced to decide on your top 10. And I bet it takes a lot of effort to swallow your pride and accept those free gifts and goodies from companies. Finally to top it all, meeting celebrities. You guys got guts, mere mortals would tremble at the very idea. We just have one question for you freeloading, cookie cereal eating, game hogging, celebrity stoking bastards: where do we sign up?
Khaled Salloum and Mustafa Haidar, via email

You're right Khaled and Mustafa, it is incredibly demanding to work on *PSW*, but our bosses pay us incredibly well for our work so there's really no need to worry. When we get home after another gruelling day at the coalface, having spent eight or nine hours hammering away at *Pro Evolution 3*, at least we can console ourselves by stripping down to our briefs and rolling through mountains of money. Thanks for the concern though.



JAK Easy there sport, we like you alright?

WILLIAM TOLD

And so it was that the richest and most evil man on the planet, the demon William of Gates, had devised a hellish scheme. "I shall construct a device," he said, "so large that it will block the beaming rays of the eternal sun (see fig 1) and I shall call it the large box... or Xbox. I haven't decided yet." The sun became infuriated and its fury manifested itself in a monumental heatwave. But hark, a resistance began to form, and black

SEND YOUR THOUGHTS TO:
Dialogue, PSW,
78 Renwick St,
Redfern NSW 2016
Australia.
OR...
psw@next.com.au

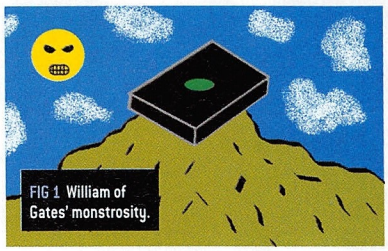


FIG 1 William of Gates' monstrosity.

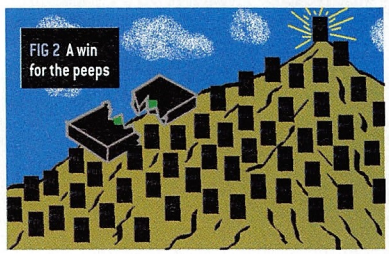


FIG 2 A win for the peeps

monoliths did descend on mountain high where William had plonked his monstrosity (see fig 2). And by sheer gaming brilliance overthrew the rich bastard's plans. For those monoliths were mighty PS2s. They then celebrated their victory swaying from side to side to the lyrical stylings of The Pixies singing River Euphrates. Camera zooms out/fade to black/roll credits. (As for the GameCubians of Nintendodia, they could not come as it was their naptime).
Seán Wrenn, via email.

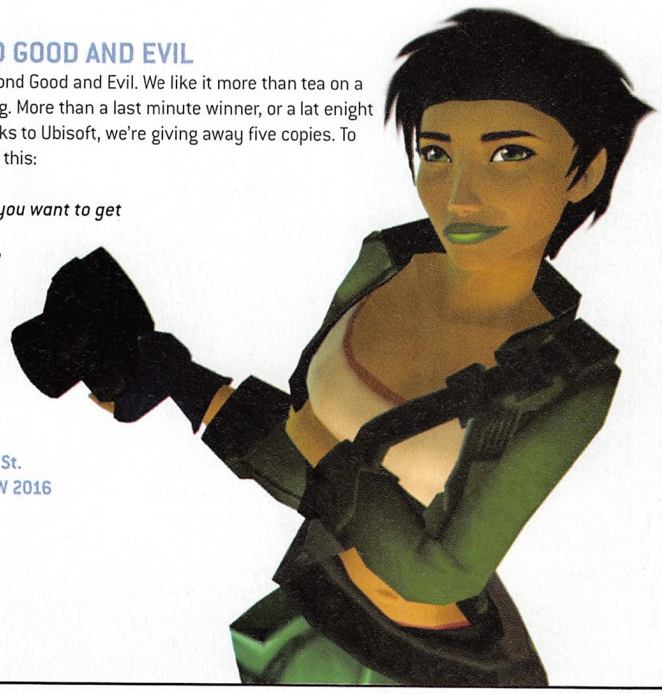
A tiny work of genius. *PSW* salutes.

TOP 12 THINGS A GOOD BOYFRIEND DOES

1) Holds your hand whenever he possibly can.
2) Puts his arms around your waist and whispers in your ear, "I love you."
3) Kisses you every chance he gets.
4) Holds you close when you're cold.
5) Holds you close and then kisses you.
6) Kisses you on the tip of your nose.
7) When you're in the movies together, he puts his arm around you and then you rest your head on his shoulder and then he tilts your chin and he kiss you very lightly. Ahh!
8) Massages your neck when it hurts.
9) When people diss you, he stands up for you.
10) Looks at you and tells you that he loves you.
11) Puts your head on his chest so you can listen to the steady beat of his heart.
12) Always opens all doors for you.
Jamie Stocker, via email

Top 5 things a real boyfriend does:
1) Puts his hands wherever he possibly can.
2) Puts his tongue in your ear and belches, "Chuck us the Hobnobs."
3) Looks up your skirt every chance he gets.
4) Holds you close when you're cold, and then rubs your arse with extreme vigour.
5) When you are alone, he makes a series of deeply improper and obscene suggestions, refusing to take no for an answer until you tell

WIN! TWO OF CHRISTMAS' FINEST



BEYOND GOOD AND EVIL

We like Beyond Good and Evil. We like it more than tea on a cold morning. More than a last minute winner, or a lat enight kebab. Thanks to Ubisoft, we're giving away five copies. To win, answer this:

Why would you want to get into photo journalism?

Address entries to:
Snap
PSW
78 Renwick St.
Redfern NSW 2016



PRINCE OF PERSIA: THE SANDS OF TIME

Heck! Another game we love. Is it just us or is gaming healthier now than it ever has been before. Those fools who've got some nostalgic shit going for crap like Pong are seriously misguided. Anyway, we're giving 5 copies of Prince away. Answer this:

What makes you a prince?

Address entries to:
Princely
PSW
78 Renwick St.
Redfern NSW 2016

him that your that your short-tempered father is always back from the working men's club in time to catch *Robot Wars* on Foxtel, which starts in five minutes.

YOUR TEN-MINUTE FREEVIEW HAS EXPIRED

I have a major problem concerning my gaming time. You see, I have two TVs in my house. My PS2 is connected to the main one and the other TV is so small its not even worth mentioning. I used to get loads of opportunities to game until my stupid older brother moved back into my house. Now I never get a chance to play anymore. During the day he watches crap like Bert Newton and at night he watches previews of porn in the dark under a big blanket (you know well what he's doing). I hate him and I never, ever get a chance to game. Has this happened to any of the *PSW* team? If so please help me out before I kill someone.
Piaras Ó Murchú, via email

Of more of a worry to us right now is that you're physically present to witness your brother and his grotty adventures with his big blanket. Maybe if you'd let him maul his meat in private, he'd be more willing to miss Bert. Have a word with him. Failing that, tell your parents that he's turning your front room into an orgasm arcade and wait for them to turf him out.

inform Charts

This week		Title	Genre	Publisher
1	▲	Eyetoy: Play	Compilation	Sony
2	▼	Rugby 2004	Sports	Electronic Arts
3	▲	GTA: Vice City	Adventure	Take 2
4	▲	Tiger Woods PGA 2004	Sports	Electronic Arts
5	✪	Medal Of Honor: Frontline Ptm	Action	Electronic Arts
6	▼	Conflict Desert Storm 2 Baghdad	Action	SCI
7	◆	Finding Nemo	Adventure	THQ
8	▼	SOCOM: US Navy Seals	Action	Sony
9	▲	Grand Theft Auto 3 Ptm	Adventure	Take 2
10	✪	YuGiOh Duelist Of Roses	Strategy	Konami
11	▼	Warhammer 40K Fire Warrior	Action	THQ
12	▼	AFL Live 2004	Sports	Acclaim
13	✪	Tom Clancy's Splinter Cell	Adventure	Ubi Soft
14	▼	Soul Calibur 2	Action	Namco
15	▼	Colin McRae Rally 4	Racing	Codemasters
16	✪	Tom Clancy's Ghost Recon	Strategy	Ubi Soft
17	▼	Dancing Stage MegaMix w Mat	All Other	Konami
18	▼	Burnout 2	Racing	Acclaim
19	▼	Midnight Club 2	Racing	Take 2
20	◆	Madden NFL 2004	Sports	Electronic Arts

✪ New Entry
◆ Non Mover
▲ Up from last week
▼ Down from last week

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SONY
PS2
PlayStation 2
MEMORY CARD
MEMORY CARD

PLAYSTATION 2 GOES ONLINE

ON OCTOBER 17 SONY LAUNCHED THE GOOD SHIP PlayStation 2 Online into the wild seas of Australia. It's a brave move, considering the relatively low level of broadband usage in Australia, as well as geographic characteristics that are not exactly conducive to high-quality online play. While in Europe or North America, tens of millions live within 100 milliseconds of eachother, only 20 million at most could ever hear your cries for help playing online in Australia. Factor in PS2 ownership and broadband use, and it's obvious that PS2 online isn't going to be huge here for quite some time. Still, complications aside, we think we've waited long enough – The US has been playing SOCOM online for more than a year. And despite Australia being very much the arse end of the first world, there are more than enough both committed and casual gamers to make online work down under, whereever your interest lies.

For players of PC online games, the PS2 Online experience offers only limited appeal. In almost every genre, there are many equivalent titles available on PC. Shooters? You may have heard of Counter-Strike, or more recent gems such as Battlefield: 1942. It's a similar story in the case of racing games, as well as sports titles, while many kinds of games, such as the real-time strategy game, will forever remain the domain of the PC. However, it's not specifically the appeal of the software (yet) that makes an online console experience so attractive. The simple interface and plug and play mentality at the heart of the PlayStation 2 is the reason to get excited. While there probably won't be any must-have online titles until Gran Turismo 4 hits early next year, the PS2's ease of use enables you to forget about pings, patches and poor performance, so you can concentrate on an immediate online experience. And that, fair readers, is a very good thing.

For those, however, that have never played an online title before, then it's all signs pointing to yes. The unique experience of running into human players on the field or on the track, or better, running with them into combat, is a gaming experience that is challenging, rewarding, unpredictable and fun. Team-mate AI problems? A thing of the past (unless you're playing Richard)! PS2 Online makes multiplayer, arguably the pinnacle of gaming, more accessible than it ever has been before. The online factor can add more to a game than its graphics, sound or gameplay, and, if utilised well by developers, may raise a mediocre title into the upper echelons, or turn a great game into the great game. While the console online gaming experience will struggle to offer the PC's technical flexibility (or general customisation) that leads to the kind of variety that maintains online gaming communities, it's cheaper, and easier to use. Simply, it is both the perfect introduction to online gaming, and, inevitably down the line, the popular standard.

HOW TO?
Buy! Let's start with the PlayStation 2. Most of you would theoretically own one, but if not, then that's where you should begin. For 70 bucks pick up the network adapter pack from all the good, and even some of the lesser retailers. You'll also need a memory card, to save your ISP settings. We'll assume you faithful PSW readers aren't fools, so we dare not hold your hand like your mother might when crossing a busy road. Simply, the pack contains this thingamajig (we sometimes fear we're too low-brow here at PSW...nah) you attach to the back of your PS2, that connects to your internet connection/hub. Shove in the network connection software disc and follow the prompts. It's all quite painless, although it

"IT IS BOTH THE PERFECT INTRODUCTION TO ONLINE GAMING, AND, INEVITABLY DOWN THE LINE, THE POPULAR STANDARD"



THINGAMAJIG Yes, yes, ram it in there.

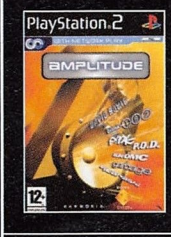
IMPORTANT MEN QUOTES #1: GERRY HARVEY, HARVEY NORMAN

What impact will broadband have on console gaming?

Well now that you've got things like this, the PS2 and this network device and the latest gaming technology, and people being able to interact with eachother. This is, like, this is, like, a great big step forward. You can see situations where families will play families and you might have cousins playing cousins. My cousin's in Perth, with his family and we'll play them in this game. You know, we'll all get involved. It's like Christmas time when we're all playing Monopoly together. They're in Perth, we're in Sydney.

This man is gold. Chuck it on the cover Ash: "Cousins now able to play eachother, like Monopoly."

ONLINE PRE-XMAS 2003
THE GAMES PSW WILL PLAY

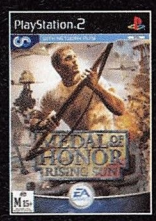


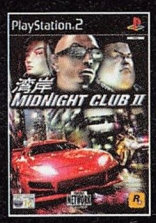
AMPLITUDE

One of the opportunities for some variety in our online experience. A tasty, funky game, perfect for some late night entertainment. High friend-making potential as well.

MEDAL OF HONOR: RISING SUN

Possibly Christmas' biggest shooter goes online. This one should be big dumb fun. The question is, has EA had enough time to implement online properly?





MIDNIGHT CLUB II

A truly rocking game, that's well worth a revisit with the advent of online.

IMPORTANT MEN QUOTES #2: MICHAEL EPHRAIM, SONY COMPUTER ENTERTAINMENT, AUSTRALIA/NZ

What will online gaming mean for PlayStation 2 owners?

Well in the past you used to be able to play against the machine, or a mate in two-player mode, but now you're going to be able to play with gamers all over the country and all over the world. The infinite possibilities of who you might be playing will change every day. The potential to be involved in tournaments, check high scores, you know, the whole sense of community, is going to be expanded dramatically with online gaming. The options, as we say, are infinite.

Is the launch of online gaming a new direction for PlayStation?

Online gaming is the first step in connecting PS2, a truly convergent device, to broadband. With that, in the future, we could see many different applications of entertainment coming through a console like PS2, in the lounge room.

would be good if you could register a global identity for the systems, allowing reservation of beloved usernames and settings across a range of games.

COST

Let's start with the obvious. PS2: $330. Memory card: $70 (for the official 8mb). And then comes the Network associated costs. Beyond the initial $70 outlay for the Network Adapter (plus free Hardware: Online Arena game), you'll be hit for data charges by your ISP. Unsurprisingly, you'll be using similar levels of data transferral on PS2 Online as you might with online PC games. While it will vary from game to game, you're generally talking upwards of a few dozen megabytes per hour. Sony have been out pushing their bandwagon though, and Telstra thought they'd jump on for the drive towards the town of Broadband Uptake. See, online console gaming is another (and major) incentive for people to pick up broadband,

"AS WE SAY AROUND HERE, IF YOU HAVEN'T PLAYED ONLINE, YOU HAVEN'T PLAYED"



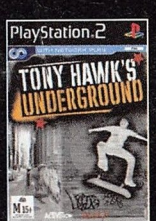
SOCOM

So it's not the best thing in the world. But it's pretty much the best thing online at the moment. Pity about voice comms.

SSX3

It's big, it's funky, we like it (as you might have read on page 74). We like it even more now we know it's online.





TONY HAWK'S UNDERGROUND

Tony Hawk's 4 is also available online, but why would you bother when you can scan yourself in and skate the crap out of everyone with this.

and Telstra are dead keen to take advantage of it. As Nick Foster, Director of IT and Finance at Sony Computer Entertainment Australia (a man who's been heavily involved in the establishment of the infrastructure here) suggests, "theoretically it's a marriage made in heaven for both ISPs and ourselves". Predictably, Telstra have decided to give gamers a break, with downloads associated with your PS2 escaping the reach of your quota, for the immediate future. That's good folks, very good. Sure, you'll still have to pay the $60-plus contract fee, but at least a *SOCOM* addiction isn't going to wreak havoc with your internet bill (your girlfriend Jill, on the other hand...). However, there will probably be subscription fees for quite a few other games. Titles may come with limited free online time, but payment will be required for extended use. Groups of games such as the EA Sports line-up, or those simply from a single publisher, might attract an umbrella fee to play online. Having said that, the good news is that we do have confirmation that, regarding official Sony titles, there are no subscription titles on the horizon (and we can assume that *GT4* is on the horizon). For all other subscription fee info, we'll have precise pricing as soon as we get it.

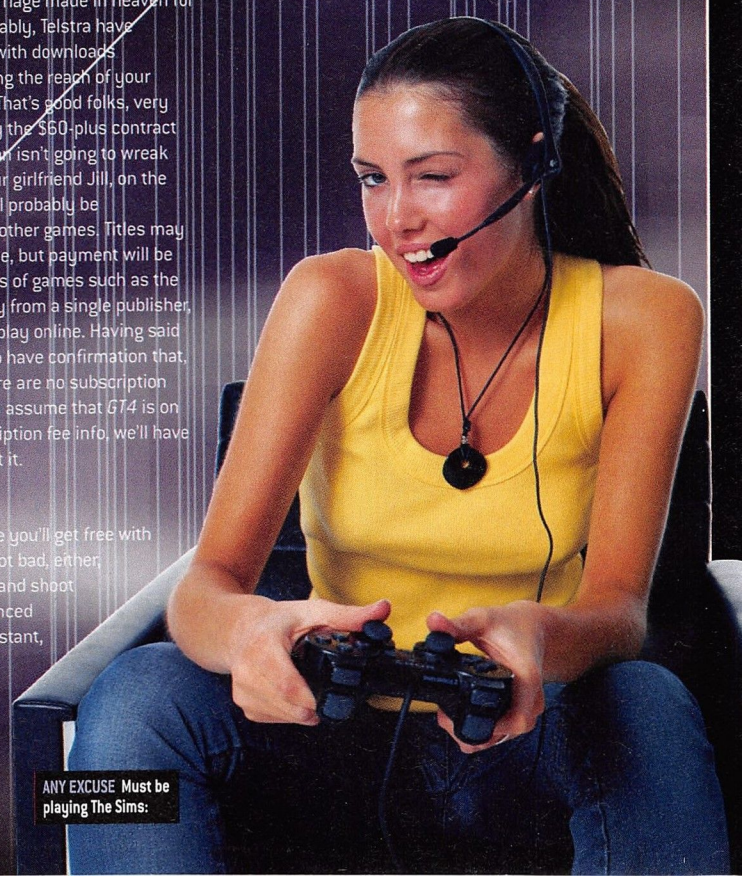
GAMES

Hardware: Online Arena is a game you'll get free with your Network Adapter pack. It's not bad, either, offering straightforward jump-in and shoot action. Still, its potential for advanced strategy and teamplay is non-existant, and its extended use will be restricted to the easily pleased, fools, and those with no lives. *SOCOM*? Yes indeed. Our favourite Navy Seals game, and perhaps our least favourite at the same time – it's not a big genre – is transformed online. It was never a great game offline, receiving a score of 7 a few issues back, but is a perfect example of the power of multiplayer: *SOCOM* online is excellent. While the purist within frowns at the 'look around corners' capability of the third-person view, the game plays consistently. It is even perhaps a worthy *CounterStrike* equivalent for the PS2 online. However, *SOCOM* is very much a first generation online game.

The games list will grow rapidly, particularly into 2004 with *Gran Turismo 4*. Also look out for EA's commitment – they have a range of titles extending beyond their sports games, such as *Need for Speed Underground* and *Medal of Honor Rising Sun*, which should get you to sit up and take notice of the advantages of the online. But why, EA, why!? Why remove the online functionality in our favourite EA game at the moment, *Tiger Woods 2004*, for the PAL market? Sony is well aware of the current dearth of top titles available for online play. As Nick Foster makes clear, "content is king" and without the *GT4*s of the gaming world, there is simply insufficient incentive to get online.

TECHNICAL DIFFICULTIES

The biggest problems you're going to have with PS2 online are your own fault. Well, not so much your fault, but definitely your own problem. See, the open-ended structure of PS2 Online and, in particular, the associated



ANY EXCUSE **Must be playing The Sims:**

IMPORTANT MEN QUOTES #3: JUSTIN MILNE, TELSTRA BIGPOND

What impact will game consoles have on broadband adoption?

All kinds of gaming, including and probably especially platform gaming like the PS2 is absolutely fundamental to the uptake of broadband in Australia. Gamers stay online for a long time. They download big files. They need speed. And some of the new games that are coming out for PS2 require all those things. And they provide a tremendously compelling application that keeps people there, whether they're mums or dads or kids.

absence of a connection standard means some ISPs might not be able to quite offer the desired experience. By problems we mean latency, warping, lag – whatever you want to call it – things stopping a smooth flow of data. Generally, these will relate to how exactly your internet access is routed, and how smooth this passage is. Sony won't be able to do much at all, so you'd better get that ISP's tech support on speed dial. We wouldn't want to exclude the possibility of an ISP change as well – it might just be easier. And here's the beauty of the BigPond deal– consumers who are heavy game players (relative to internet usage) need not go past Telstra, as much as we hate to admit it. Expect deals with other ISPs soon though, if you have a Telstra allergy. Of course, as time goes by, the system can only get smoother, so retain some faith in the future.

FORMAT

Unlike Xbox Live, Sony's major online console competitor (which has also recently been launched), the PS2 Online system is designed without a central point of call – an umbrella subscription database. This has a couple of advantages – primarily, flexibility. Each publisher can establish their own servers and community without the restrictions imposed by a single frontend. As Nick Foster suggested when we recently spoke, this flexibility makes it easy for Activision to incorporate the face-personalising software into their Tony Hawk's Underground server system for example. Secondly, the consumer has more freedom in selecting precisely what they want to pay for, thus distancing themselves from indirectly supporting titles and types of games they may not play. That lame racing game server? You won't have to pay for it. Foster states: "we're focusing on delivering the best experience for the individual on a game by game basis".

DISAPPOINTMENTS

So far, the major disappointment has been the implementation of voice communication. *Warhammer 40k Fire Warrior*, the major action shooter alternative to *SOCOM* available, lacks it totally, while *SOCOM*'s walkie-talkie delayed style is frustrating and in the heat of battle utterly useless. Sure, there are probably bandwidth issues going on the in background that are so far above our heads we can't even see them, but we surely should be able to choose who to talk to, who not to talk to, see who is talking when you hear a voice, and, above all, be able to communicate by voice in the lobby. Voice communication must be utilised if PS2 Online is ever going to be truly attractive. We'd also like to see a chat feature that comes as standard with the online package, enabling little sisters and desperate friends to log in and make friends, or deploy virtual identities, or something. Oh, and also to use the Eyetoy for some easy lounge room videoconferencing action. When questioned about the subject, Nick Foster could only offer this: "as regards to a general chat facility as part of an overall community - it's not something we're focusing on at the moment but it's definitely the kind of product offering that could be made available."

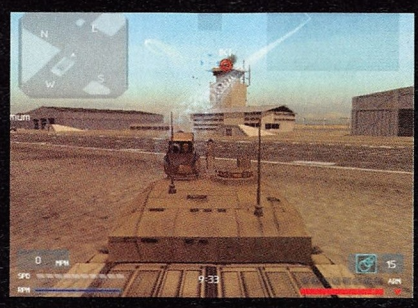
SUMMARY

So that's Australia's introduction the PS2 Online right there. Most of you can, and will, simply snigger and get back to playing *Final Fantasy VII*, disbelieving that you can actually have fun with other people. The more observant (and the better adjusted) out there will recognise however that this moment should be remembered. This is not only the first time a (real) console is hooking itself up the intermatrix (Dream-what?). This is likewise not simply a new direction for the PlayStation brand. This is one small step in the path towards integrated home entertainment. And sure, it's not going to be all that popular for the foreseeable future, but, as we say around here, if you haven't played online, you haven't played. Expect plenty more coverage of online in future issues of *PSW*.

MINI-REVIEW
HARDWARE: ONLINE ARENA



It's not earth shatteringly brilliant maybe, but it's fast and undemanding fun, and exactly the sort of thing that's going to keep the online massive going while they wait for *Gran Turismo 4*. In other words we like it. OK, so it's not that technically impressive – gameplay wise it's about as simplistic as your average Big Brother contestant – and there are less features to it than a $150 DVD player, but it's undemanding fun with a capital "F" and that's what matters. Simply take a big, empty arena, fill it with eight or so heavily armed vehicles and then let them drive about and attempt to blow everything up.



PSW VERDICT

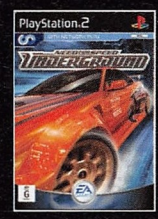
> UPPERS	> DOWNERS
> Easy to pick up and play	> Lack of decent vehicles
> Reliable online experience	> Too few maps
> Nice chunky graphics	> Very simplistic
> New way to make friends	> New way to make enemies

GRAPHICS	> Good solid vehicles, smooth online play	7
SOUNDS	> Predictable spot effects, and that's it	6
GAMEPLAY	> Great fun but simplistic in the extreme	6

OVERALL SCORE 6

Solid, if basic. And you definitely wouldn't get online specifically for this title. But considering it comes free with the network package, we can only nod our heads in approval.

ONLINE PRE-XMAS 2003
THE GAMES PSW WILL PLAY



NEED FOR SPEED: UNDERGROUND

A racer that will no doubt be popular leading into Xmas, Underground will be great for showing off your fluorescent tasteless motor to your mates.

THE SIMS: BUSTIN' OUT



This one's for your sister/girlfriend/mother. It's all co-operative play and simple fun. No doubt we'll get addicted, but before that happens we'll clutch onto our masculinity.

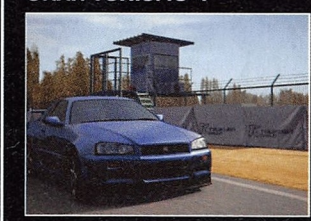
2004'S BOLTERS
THE YEAR OF THE ONLINE?

SOCOM 2



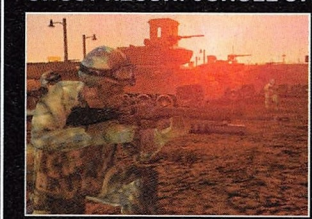
The first one was okay, but we demand improvements. Looks quite nice though.

GRAN TURISMO 4



Sweet! We just hope there are online options that offer more than just races. And voice!

GHOST RECON: JUNGLE STORM



Just dropping into 2004, this should be the definitive squad-based shooter, hopefully.

RESIDENT EVIL: OUTBREAK



This one is a bit of a keystone title. Will we get the full experience here? Fingers crossed.


NBA JAM
TRAINING CAMP
DAY
54
SUPA-RO
COACH
NBA
SOME ARE BORN GREAT-SOME TRY HARD
THE NBA AND INDIVIDUAL NBA MEMBER TEAM IDENTIFICATIONS USED ON OR IN THIS PRODUCT ARE TRADEMARKS, COPYRIGHTED DESIGNS AND OTHER FORMS OF INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY OF NBA PROPERTIES, INC. AND THE RESPECTIVE NBA MEMBER TEAMS AND MAY NOT BE USED, IN WHOLE OR IN PART, WITHOUT THE PRIOR WRITTEN CONSENT OF NBA PROPERTIES, INC. © 2003 NBA PROPERTIES, INC. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED.



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FINAL FANTASY X-2

A SEQUEL-SEQUEL TO THE SERIES WITHOUT SEQUELS? PSW VISITED SQUARE-ENIX HQ IN TOKYO TO CHAT WITH THE FINAL FANTASY X-2 TEAM ABOUT THIS SIGNIFICANT SEQUEL AND TO SET THE RECORD STRAIGHT.

IT'S ALL A BIT TOPSY-TURVY, BUT SEE IF YOU CAN follow the logic. The game that was never final and which spawned nine 'sequels' is getting its first true sequel since its original release 17 years ago – but this sequel is to the tenth game in the series. And it's imaginatively called *Final Fantasy: Ten-Two*. Yep, no sub-title either. Just *X-2*.

Make sense?

To simplify it just a tad then; if you don't count those infernal chocobos and mogs (*Final Fantasy* fans will know what we're talking about here), then each of the ten games in the *Final Fantasy* RPG series have been stand-alone titles with no direct links or continuity from one to the each other, offering all new characters, locations and stories to experience. But the latest in the series breaks from this convention, with SquareEnix (formerly Squaresoft) having developed a linear follow-up to the smash *Final Fantasy X* released on the PS2 in 2002. Which means fans of the series – and of *FFX* in particular – will get the chance to re-visit characters and places featured in a previous *FF* title - a first that won't be lost on the faithful (SquareEnix long ago found the secret formula for *Final Fantasy* and has stuck with it ever since).

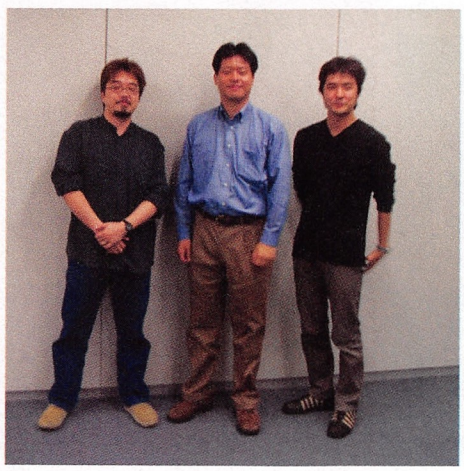
So is *FFX2* simply a case of SquareEnix milking the lucrative *Final Fantasy* cash-cow for all it's worth, tiding those fans that didn't or won't buy into *FFXI* (the online RPG take of the series which went live in Japan earlier in the year, and has just gone live in the US) until *Final Fantasy XII* – the next singleplayer instalment in the series – releases in late 2004?

It doesn't seem so. Not obviously, at least. "Freedom is the dominant theme of *Final Fantasy X-2*," offers Yoshinori Kitase, *FFX*'s and *FFX2*'s producer, and the man at the helm (or somewhere nearby) of all the main *Final Fantasy* games since *FFV*. And he's not just taking about the characters and plot of *FFX2* here either (just what do ex-heroes do once they've already saved the world from a great and impending evil?); he's also referring to the freedom his development team employed when





LOVING IT Like a shot through the heart.



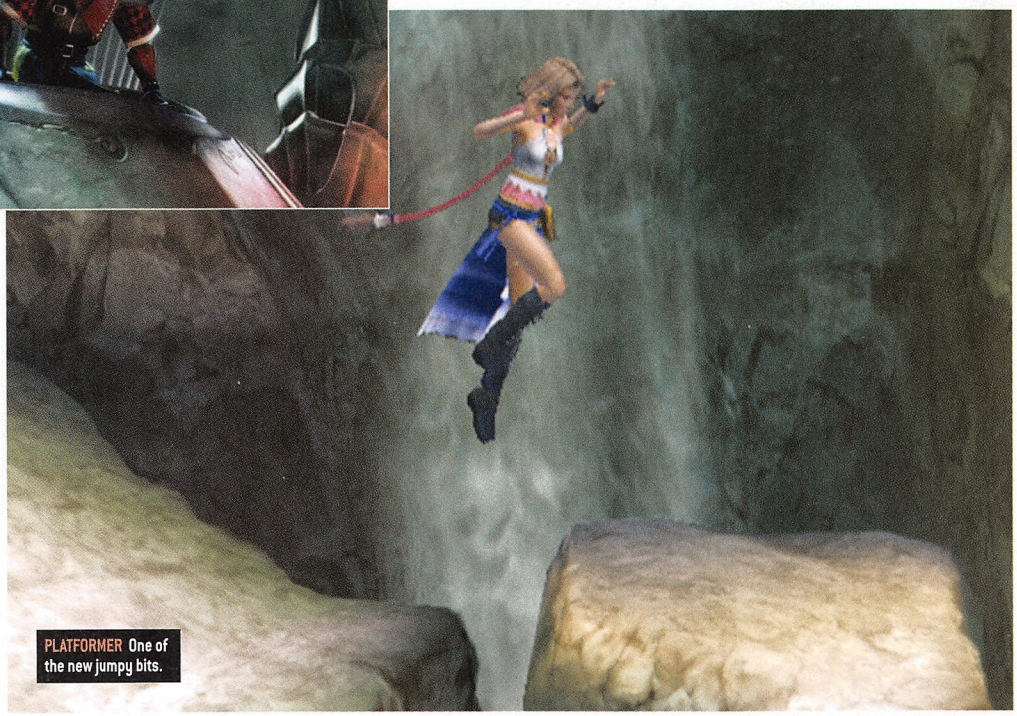


(l-r) Motomu Toriyama - Director, Yoshinori Kitase – Producer, Nojima Kazushige – Scenario Writer



TIDUS Quite the enigma our boy is.

"WE CONSTANTLY ASKED THE OPPOSITE SEX FOR ADVICE. THEY WERE VERY HELPFUL"



PLATFORMER One of the new jumpy bits.



SO MUCH SKIN I'd like to see what Square came up with before they removed some of the sexiness.



THERE SHE IS The Chocobo: one of the rare inevitabilities in life. We'd be lost without it.

FINAL FANTASY VII – ADVENT CHILDREN

When a well respected game developer such as SquareEnix gathers together International journalists in a Tokyo hotel to announce a 'new' title not even a psychic could predict it would be a 'digital content' release of *Final Fantasy VII*.

While the foreign press gasped in acknowledgment the Japanese press remainder unmoved. An indication that they were aware of what was coming, something confirmed when publications like Famitsu came out with 19 page spread only a day later.

While the American press charged in with questions regarding what this information meant, responses from Square's creative team where guarded if not a little evasive.

Is it a movie – no, is it a series – no, is it a new form of TV game – no. So what is "Digital content"? Current information says that *Advent Children* will be a 60 minute DVD released in Japan in mid 2004, although Square will be looking to make this a multi format release where possible.

Rumours had been rampant that a remake of the classic game was in the wings, however Square stated that since the game is currently playable on the PS2, a remake of *FF7* isn't a priority for the company at this time. *Final Fantasy VII: Advent Children* will take place two years after the PlayStation game opening the doors for the return of prominent characters Cloud and Sephiroth to the story in a well-ordered world that is about to face a new plague 'Seikon-Shoukougun'.

creating *FFX2*. "When we were asked to do the sequel, we all knew that it was imperative that we did something different," continues Kitase. "We wanted a change; making another formula *Final Fantasy* in this context would have been tedious – for us as well as our audience."

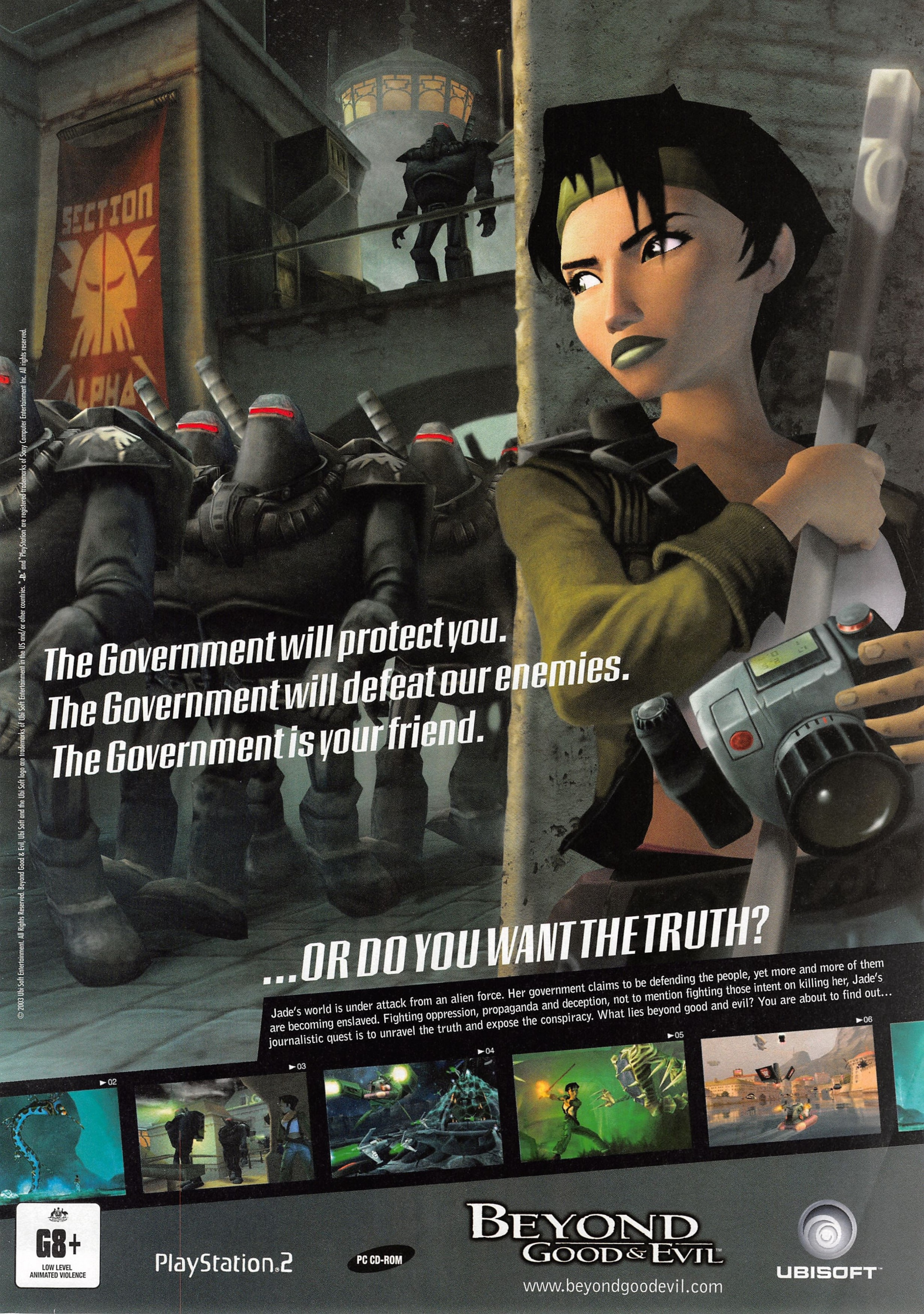
But don't believe the hype. When *FFX2* was first announced, it seemed as though SquareEnix was about to turn the series onto its head, employing all manner of elements from other games in a desperate attempt to provide something new for the series. There was talk of the *Final Fantasy* series taking on Lara Croft at her own game with more action-oriented, platform jumping sections – full 3D gameworlds requiring fine acrobatics to negotiate. There was even discussion of side-scrolling gameplay elements to be included. Early screenshots showed an abundance of flesh of the female characters in the game, and it was revealed early that the stars of this sequel were to be the female characters from *FFX*. *Spice Girls Fantasy*, anyone?

The reality of the situation is somewhat more modest. Yes, *FFX2* is an experiment on SquareEnix's behalf and it's *Final Fantasy* like you've never seen it before – but it's not a huge departure from the staples of the series. This is still very much an epic Final Fantasy adventure with plenty of familiar mechanics, but with a few significant twists: there are no male leads, it's more action-oriented, it's an *FF* that dares to have a bit more fun with itself (previous titles have been accused of being just a tad too sombre), and it's a *Final Fantasy* that's a lot less linear than others in the series.

Set in Spira two years after the events of *FFX*, the land is experiencing a period of peace and prosperity known as the "Eternal Calm" after Yuna defeated the great evil known as Sin. Lacking in direction and more than a little broken-hearted from the loss of the object of her affection, Yuna is stirred into action after coming across a magical sphere – a recording device that archives images of past events – which reveals some of what happened to the male protagonist of *FFX*. With the support of the bubbly Rikku and new-comer Paine, Yuna becomes a sphere-hunter to piece together the mystery of Tidus' fate.

The obvious difference to other *FF*s is the casting of the main protagonists of this story: they're all female. "Since the clear majority of the staff involved in the making of *FFX2* were males in their mid-thirties, we always had the worry of whether we would be able to create a game focused around female characters," explains Kitase. "So we constantly asked the opposite sex for advice. They were very helpful," adds Kitase. "They often criticised certain aspects of the dress sphere system and the outfits – that they were too sexy. They also criticised many aspects of the scenarios – that girls don't think or act like that." Sexy indeed.

Apart from a focus on female characters, SqaureEnix implemented the previously mentioned dress sphere system into the game – a modified version of the Grid Sphere system of character development used in *FFX*. It's remarkably simple: each outfit that characters collect during the game represents a new character class (character class interaction was abandoned after *Final Fantasy V*), offering different abilities and proficiencies in character stats. There are several classes for players to experiment with, ranging from Thief to Warrior, Alchemist to Trainer, each offering different abilities both on and off the battlefield. Players won't be locked into one character class for most of the game though: characters can change outfits mid-battle, replete with flashy animation



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The Government will protect you.
The Government will defeat our enemies.
The Government is your friend.

...OR DO YOU WANT THE TRUTH?

Jade's world is under attack from an alien force. Her government claims to be defending the people, yet more and more of them are becoming enslaved. Fighting oppression, propaganda and deception, not to mention fighting those intent on killing her, Jade's journalistic quest is to unravel the truth and expose the conspiracy. What lies beyond good and evil? You are about to find out...

G8+
LOW LEVEL
ANIMATED VIOLENCE

PlayStation.2

PC CD-ROM

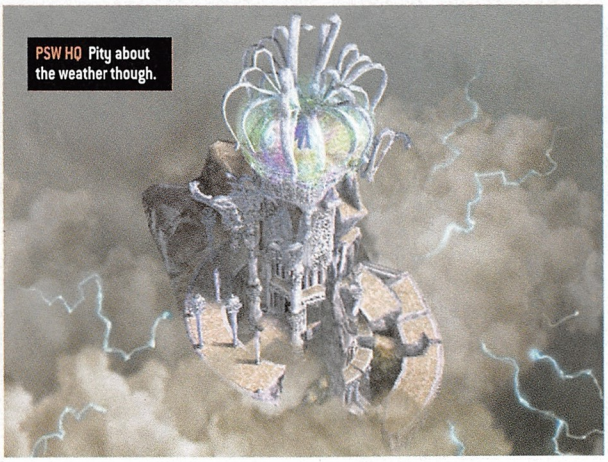
BEYOND GOOD & EVIL™

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UBISOFT™









KINGDOM HEARTS 2

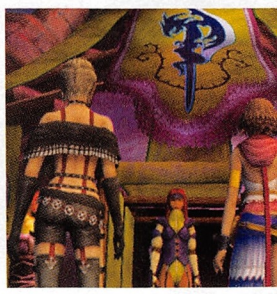
With RPG fans eagerly awaiting news on the next instalment of the *Final Fantasy* series, the elusive number XII, journalists at the Tokyo Game Show expected a sneak peak at more than just the already released poster art. Sadly it was not to be with the release of information delayed till the 19th of November 2003 (after we go to print).

However just to ensure the punters wouldn't have any loose change the pairing of the Disney and Square will be explored further with the release of *Kingdom Hearts II* for PS2. Currently scheduled for release late 2004 the only images made public where unveiled at the Tokyo Game show in the form of a 5-minute trailer minus game play.

The sequel will be set a few years after the original beginning in Twilight Town with a slightly older, redesigned, Sora. While Disney Characters Donald, Goofy and a cloaked Mickey will re-appear, *Kingdom Hearts II* holds a darker, more sinister feel possibly with the idea of drawing in those that felt the original was a little too childish to be considered a 'real' RPG. The Square team have hinted that *Kingdom Hearts II* will answer several of the unanswered mysteries and will include the appearance of yet to be named *Final Fantasy* characters.







sequences worthy of Aeon/GF summon sequences in previous games. The character's abilities will immediately reflect the outfit change, paving the way for more strategic battles in the game.

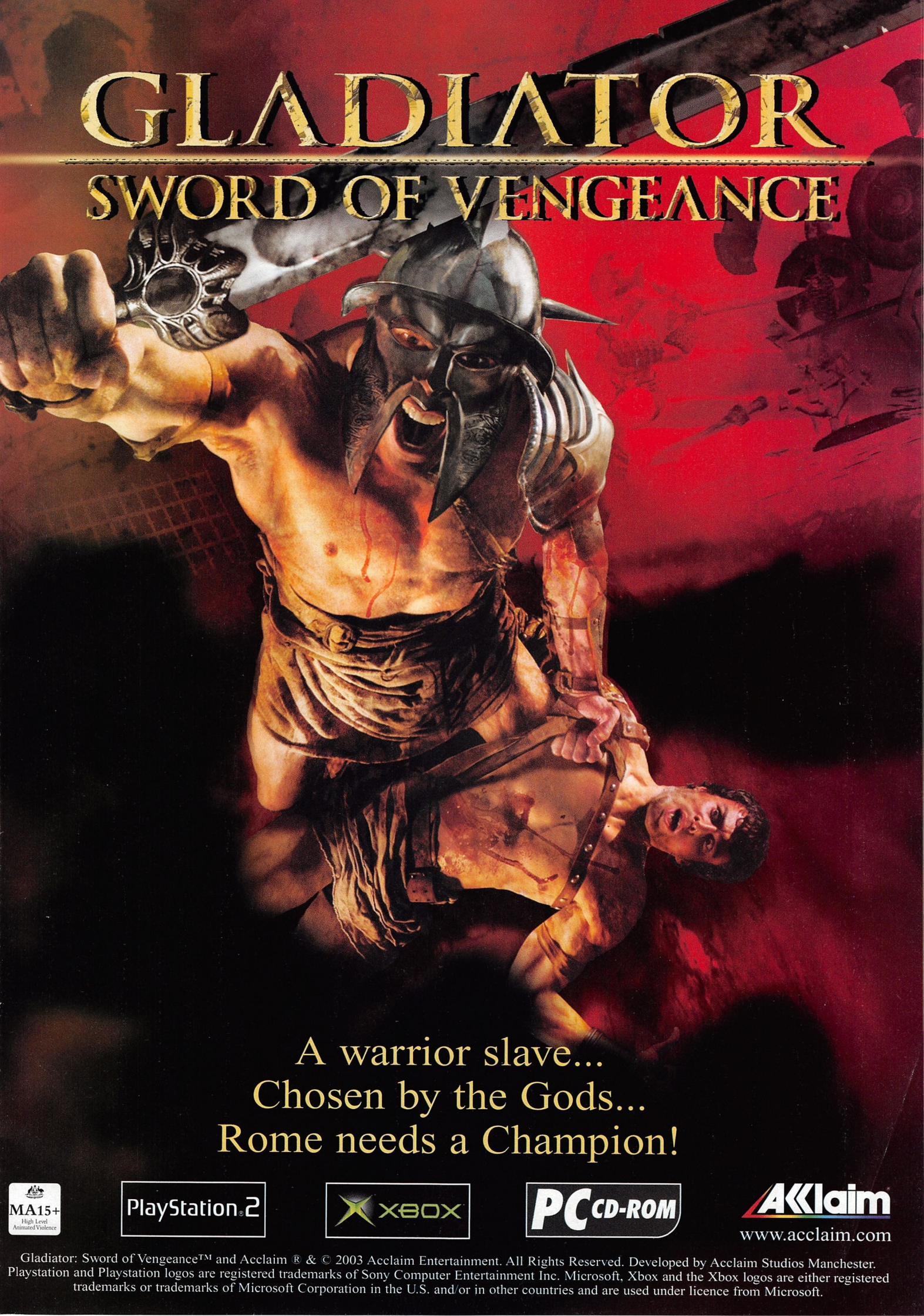
The battle system has also been given an overhaul. Gone is the slow and cumbersome Conditional Turn-Based (CTB) system of *FFX*, to be replaced with a modified version of the more familiar Active-Time Battle (ATB) system used in earlier games. With no automatic pauses for a player to choose their attacks, battles now move much quicker. Coupled with an overall increase in the speed of battles, *FFX2*'s only real concern here is that it may be too fast – even for those experienced with the series. SquareEnix has also implemented other changes to the ATB system: action queue lengths are now dependant on the option selected by the player. Casting magic will take longer than using an item, while using a standard attack will fall somewhere in between. And attacks can now be chained, offering a more lethal offensive to more experimental players.

MISSION-BASED

The structure of *Final Fantasy* games is something of a bone of contention amongst fans. As absorbing as the story and scenarios of each adventure, there's really one way to play them – from start to finish, in one very linear line. Sure, there are moments when the game world opens up and there's freedom for players to search for rare items or tie up some loose ends, but it's a very fickle illusion indeed. "We get a lot of feedback from our audience, and the single biggest complaint about the *Final Fantasy* series is the single linear structure," admits Kitase. "Players wanted more freedom, so we took it onboard as a challenge for *FFX2*." The result is a mission-based *Final Fantasy* adventure. Divided into five chapters, the story critical missions are always clearly indicated. "If players were to play nothing but these missions, the game is clearly the shortest *Final Fantasy* we've created," continues Kitase. "However if they take all the other, non-critical missions, then this clearly is the largest *Final Fantasy* we've created."

And if the detail of the early stages of the game is consistent throughout the adventure, then we'd take the more thorough approach over the condensed version any day. Newcomers will be able to slip into this adventure without too much trouble, but it's the *Final Fantasy X* faithful that will be rewarded with the attention the development team has lavished on the world. Indeed, the major drawcard of *FFX2* isn't the Spice Girls pop approach taken to the class system and overall presentation of the main characters of the game. It's the chance to revisit a world that your characters previously played a major role in shaping, and seeing how time and prosperity has treated it. Sure, *Final Fantasy X-2* is an experimental title, a prototype if you will of the future of the series. But at its heart is a world rich with character and story. And that, it goes without saying, is what *Final Fantasy* has always been about. Full review soon.

/MARCH STEPNIK AND VANESSA MORGAN



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TOM CLANCY'S GHOST RECON: JUNGLE STORM

ONE DEAD DICTATOR. ONE DEADLY TASK FORCE. ONE SHOT, ONE KILL. THIS IS THE MOST REAL, THE MOST THRILLING *GHOST RECON* YET, AND IT'S ALREADY NEARLY HERE. SO, IF YOU GO INTO THE WOODS TODAY, BE SURE OF A VERY BIG SURPRISE....

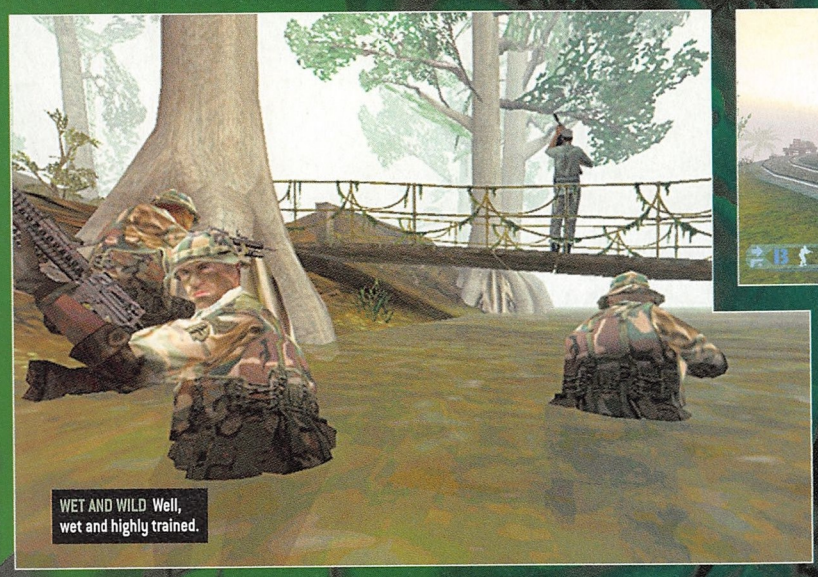
SEE IT ON THE DVD

> TYPE	TACTICAL SHOOTING
> PUBLISHER	RED STORM
> DEVELOPER	UBISOFT
> ETA	EARLY 2004
> ONLINE	YES

WE'VE NEVER BEEN TO CUBA, BUT WE IMAGINED IT WAS FULL OF a) Volkswagen Beetles, b) cigar-smoking prostitutes and c) bananas. Possibly all three together in some kind of hedonistic Marxist fruit-and-car orgy. Turns out we were wrong: it's full of men who want to kill us. At least in 2009, it will be. We're not prophets, though – we only know this because it's what *Tom Clancy's Ghost Recon: Jungle Storm* is all about. When Castro dies five years hence (says *Jungle Storm*), the country will be plunged into a tragic/exciting civil war and it'll be up to the rest of the world to sort things out. We're no experts, but we've learned to trust video games about this sort of thing. So we're ready to don a natty green-and-brown camo suit and crawl up the tropical beaches to take out the filthy totalitarian enemy. Nice one, *Jungle Storm*; we'll consider it training for the near future.

As the title delicately hints, *Jungle Storm* is from the *Ghost Recon* stable. On PC, it's just about knocked out all comers in the battle for top squad-based title. On PS2, it's been a much harder fight. Basically because the first PS2 *Ghost Recon* game was stinky. Think enemy intelligence that made *Forrest Gump* look like Hannibal Lecter. Graphics that looked like they were turned out by Big Ted and Jemima. And a general greyness and shoddiness to the whole thing that made us associate the *Ghost Recon* franchise with bad things like dying bunnies and nude Paul Vautins. So *Jungle Storm* has a lot to set right – but it's trying really, really hard.

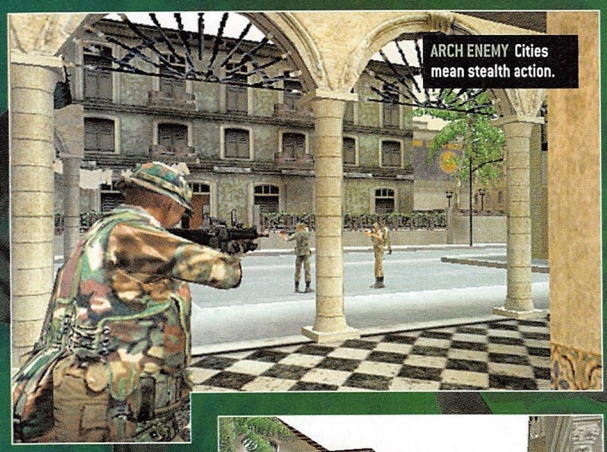
Here's how it works. You are one of two small teams charged with eliminating dug-in enemy soldiers from an area. As well as ordering everyone about, you can take direct control of any character. You can even issue voice commands to them via a USB headset – everything from ordering them to hold back from a dangerous situation, to taking out a specific enemy. And in case you were worried about Grey Corridor Syndrome, check out the screenshots: it mostly takes place in the great outdoors of Cuba and Colombia. Think it was hard spotting an enemy in >



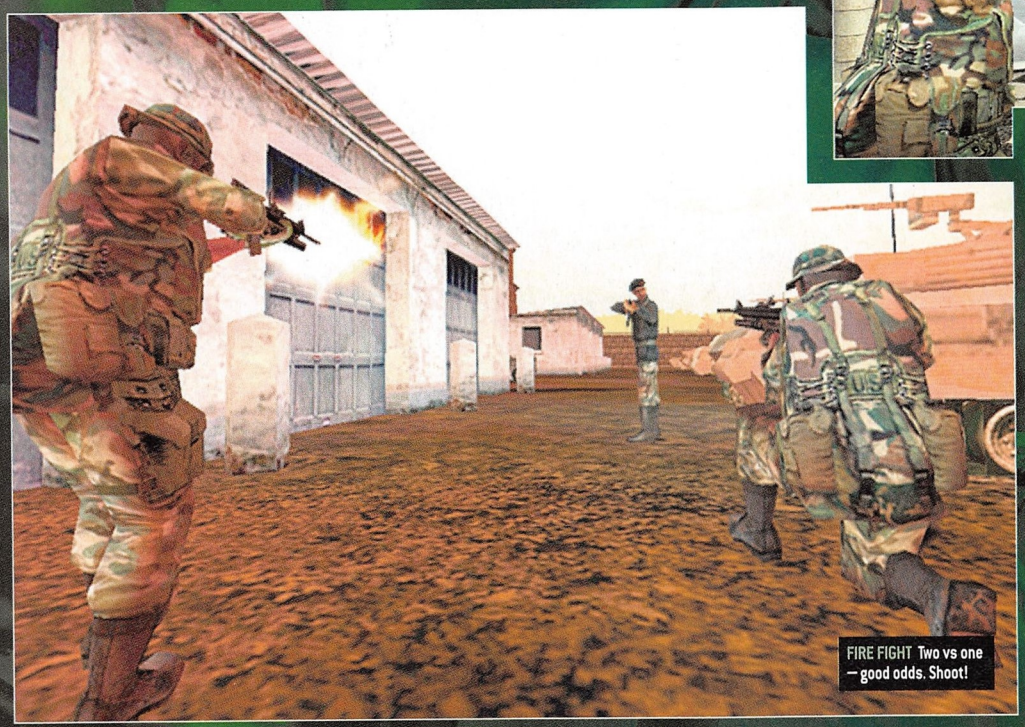
WET AND WILD **Well, wet and highly trained.**







ARCH ENEMY **Cities mean stealth action.**



FIRE FIGHT **Two vs one – good odds. Shoot!**







a single room? Wait until they've got an entire jungle island to hide in.

I'LL HAVE A MOJITO PLEASE, LOVE

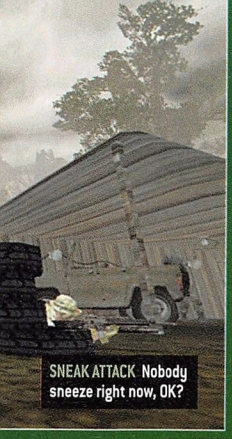
Just like in real life – just like, we tell you – there're many ways to get the job done in *Jungle Storm*. You can, of course, arrive on the shores of Cuba and run with all your men to the nearest enemy encampment, then try and shoot them down. You know, like in all the other games you play. What will happen is this: on the way to the camp, half your men will be shot down almost instantly by unseen snipers lurking in the undergrowth. Then you'll reach the camp in full view of the enemy and watch the rest of your boys get cut up by a hail of bullets, as the guards take full advantage of their cover to put a whole bucketful of caps in yo' ass. You'll lie there, bleeding to death on the Caribbean sands, as some punk two-bit hired mercenary comes over and unloads a barrel in your face. You (the video game character) will die an unmourned death on an island far from home. You (the player) will go "shit". This plainly isn't the way to go.

But there is a better way. Instead of charging over to the mercs as if they were giving out free Kit Kat Chunkies, you send your beta squad the long way round, through the fetid swamp and up onto the surrounding ridge with orders to take down anyone they see. Meanwhile, you get on your belly, tool up with a sniper rifle of your own and begin the achingly tense journey through the forest. With your posh binoculars you scan the trees for signs of action. Spotting a solitary sniper, you get him in your sights and swiftly, silently blow his brains out. When you finally reach camp, you sit and wait invisibly in the shade of the swaying ferns, until a single soldier is visible. Shoot him and all hell breaks loose, but just as you think they're about to spot you and take you down, beta team show up on the other side of the base and help you hammer them into the ground. It's the classic pincer movement, beloved of Napoleon and crabs. And it's just secured you your first victory in the war against whatever comes after communism. Longer than the direct route? Yes. More complex? Certainly. More fun? Believe it. The point we're trying to make is that this isn't some kind of easy-going, milk-and-water, half-assed arcade title. This is the real thing. This is what happens when you try to shoot people – they shoot back. We'd go so far as to say: this is hardcore.

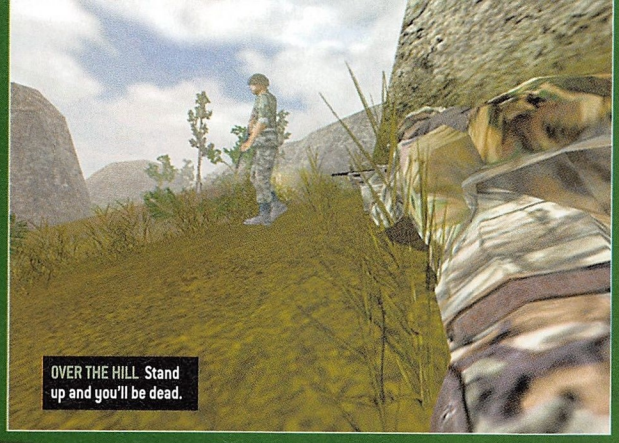
To prove it, one head shot means death to you or the enemy. Get shot up, and you won't just see a small energy bar decrease. You'll be physically decimated, unable to walk at proper speed and much more vulnerable to enemy fire (if you find yourself limping through the second half of a mission, don't be surprised). You also have to keep an eye on your injured comrades. There's no point making it back to the extraction area if you have to wait half an hour for Billy No-Feet to come crawling back with you. The ruthless ones among you will be glad to know that the missions won't end if you sustain casualties, so even when a man's down you'll be able to complete it. That man just won't be available for later missions. And because you train up your troops over a series of runs, that's going to hurt your operational ability. See, we're already talking like vets (the Vietnam kind, not the *Animal Hospital* kind. Obviously.)

THEM'S THE RULES, KID

The sense of heady realism extends to what you can and can't do. There



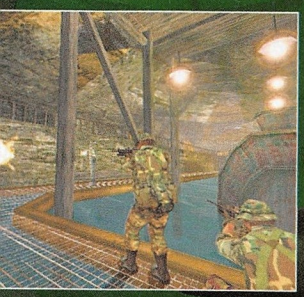
SNEAK ATTACK Nobody sneeze right now, OK?

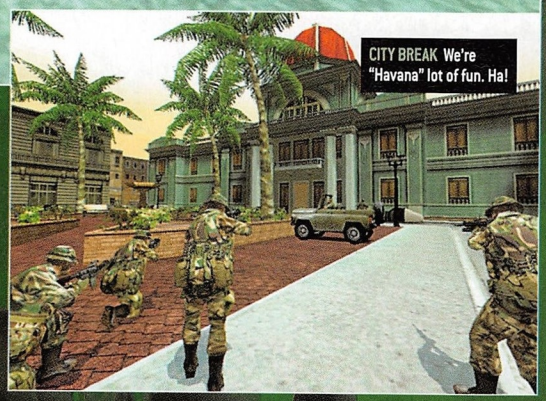


OVER THE HILL Stand up and you'll be dead.



RAW HIDE Use cover wisely. Or die horribly.





CITY BREAK We're "Havana" lot of fun. Ha!

"THIS ISN'T SOME KIND OF EASY-GOING, MILK-AND-WATER, HALF-ASSED ARCADE TITLE. THIS IS THE REAL THING... WE'D GO SO FAR AS TO SAY: THIS IS HARDCORE."

are rules of engagement here, people! For a start, you can't just go around stealing the enemy's weapons, even when they're dead and can't complain: you stick with what you're issued, soldier. Harm a hostage and you're right off limits. Shooting the enemy in the back is discouraged, and don't play around with corpses, arranging them into lifelike tableaux of famous battle scenes (that last one was just a general life-lesson, actually).

If you storm in and start spraying bullets around, you're much more likely to hurt the hostages, but also to make the captors give up the whole thing and shoot the hostages while they can. They have to do that, see, or nobody will ever take their spiel about "killing every m****r****ing last one" seriously again. It means that it's imperative not to alert other bad guys, or you'll most likely end up dead. It's a reminder that, just like in the real world, the moment you pick up a gun you've given everyone in the world >



WEAPONS OF MASS ENTERTAINMENT

WE INTERROGATE PRODUCER VINCENT GRECO AND ASSOCIATE PRODUCER SOPHIE PENDARIÈS FOR EXCLUSIVE *JUNGLE STORM* INTEL.

[*PSW*] *Jungle Storm*'s set in 2009. Is realism important to *Jungle Storm*, or will there be a ton of futuristic weapons?
[Sophie Pendariès] Realism is very important to *Jungle Storm*. It's one of the values of the *Ghost Recon* brand, and the storyline, the environments, the situations and all the weapons are realistic.
[Vincent Greco] The life cycle of weapons is very long (just think about how old the weapons currently used are, and you will understand that they do not change every five years). So definitely, the game is realistic. The only futuristic device you will find is the threat indicator that will warn you if there is a danger.

[PSW] PC gamers tend to look down on console gamers as being, well, a bit thick. How have you altered *Ghost Recon* to make it more console-friendly?
[VG] We worked a lot on the menu and on the interface. In Recruit mode you also have the auto-aim feature. The controls have been tuned very carefully, so after playing a while, you will be able to aim much more accurately without any help.

[PSW] What measures have you taken to stop getting lost in the crush of upcoming online squad-based titles like *SOCOM 2* and *Splinter Cell: Pandora Tomorrow*?
[VG] *SOCOM* and *Ghost Recon* are quite different. On *Ghost Recon* you can embody any of the six members of you team. This means that when there is something challenging to do, the player (and not the AI) can do it. Moreover if you lose one man in a mission – and with the one-shot-one-kill feature you have to be very careful – you will not find him available for the next one: he is definitively lost. In SOCOM you play always the same guy in always the same team, from mission to mission, even if a team-member gets killed (he can take half a dozen of bullets before being killed). *Ghost Recon* is more realistic and, therefore, there is more tension.

[PSW] What new gameplay additions can we expect from a jungle environment? How will camouflage affect the missions?
[SP] As far as camouflage is concerned, we added a visibility icon in the interface: its transparency will depend on how visible the soldiers are. This new indicator will bring the tactical gameplay a step further by increasing the stealth part.
[VG] Of course, each tree is a potential place to hide, and there are a lot of cover points in a jungle environment. You also have to be very careful with your sniper – his camouflage suit is so similar to his environment, even the player can spend some seconds to actually notice him while he follows the team!

[PSW] Do you have any plans to include dangerous wildlife *à la Metal Gear Solid 3*, and if so, how will it affect the gameplay?
[VG] The Ghosts are professionals (they do not eat snakes). So there are no animals as potential targets: this is not *Ghost Recon*. Of course, we could have added animals to have "false alerts" (you think there is an enemy but in fact, it's an animal), or to give an indication where the enemies are (for example, you could see birds flying away from a tree if there is someone in proximity). Perhaps next time.

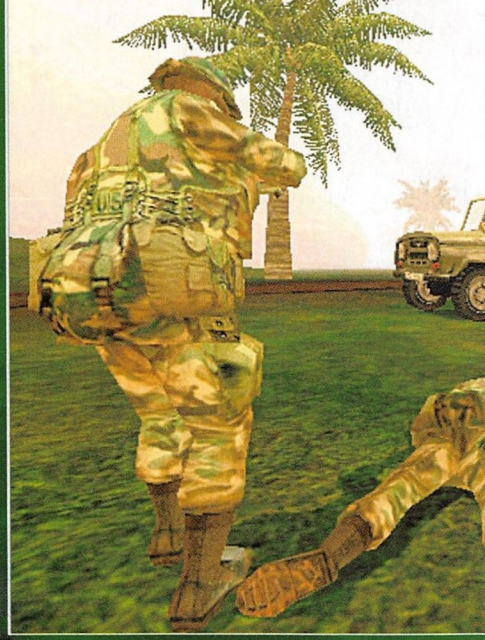
[PSW] What did you feel were the problems with the last PS2 *Ghost Recon* game, and how will you rectify them in *Jungle Storm*?
[SP] The main criticisms on the first *Ghost Recon* game on PS2 were the graphic quality and the badly balanced difficulty.
[VG] So we have worked a lot on modelisations, textures and lighting. I think the player will notice that when playing the game. Concerning the difficulty, we have done a lot of playtests to tune it, and it is now more progressive.

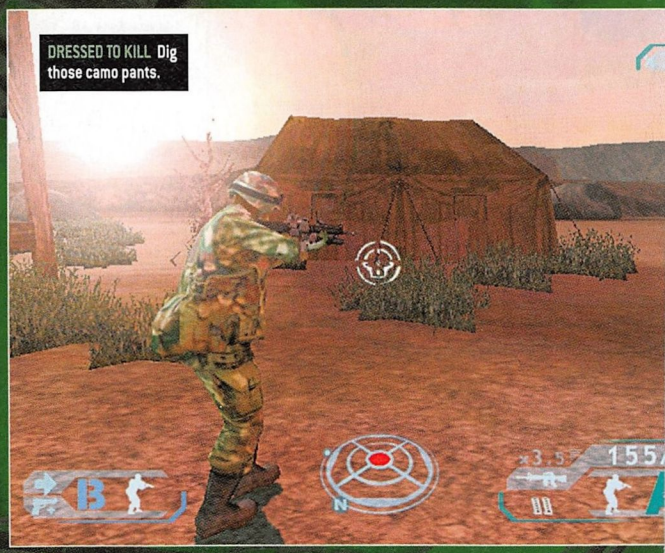
[PSW] Tell us something about the Multiplayer modes. Are there any totally new ideas that you bring to the online squad gaming table?
[SP] We have one new Multiplayer mode called Mouse Hunt. Which brings the total number of modes to 12: three solo modes, four co-op modes and five team modes.

[PSW] What sort of outdoor research did you do to ensure that you could accurately recreate a jungle environment? Were there many trips to Cuba and Colombia?
[SP] Unfortunately, there were no trips to Cuba nor Colombia....
[VG] But I will suggest your idea to my boss. Who knows, perhaps next time it will be Hawaii....



LOON PLATOON They must be mad to join.





DRESSED TO KILL Dig those camo pants.

"THE ODD LEAF FALLS SLOWLY TO THE GROUND, IN A LEISURELY, I-DON'T-GIVE-A-SHIT-ABOUT-YOUR-CONFLICT-BECAUSE-I'M-JUST-A-LEAF KIND OF WAY."

a legitimate license to shoot you in self-defense. Embarassingly, when we played, we ended up getting shot up and limping around with our last available soldier, trying to guide the hostages out of the cave complex and back to the extraction point at approximately half a mile an hour.

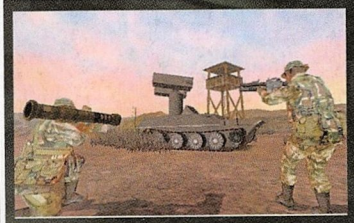
The one way in which *Jungle Storm* isn't impressing us so much right now is in the looks department. Well, in most ways at least. There's nothing here to compare with the likes of *Medal of Honor: Rising Sun*, but there's a good reason for that. Instead of being a "glass corridor" one-way trip through a set route surrounded by pretty foliage, *Jungle Storm* allows you to track your prey all over massive islands that can take tens of minutes to cross. So it's not surprising if everything looks a little less special. We're not complaining, because it allows for slicker online play. And that, say the marketing men of 2003, is where the kids are at these days. Mind you, some of what's here is looking nice, and it's all set to improve. Trees sway in the wind. Birds flit around overhead. The odd leaf falls slowly to the ground, in a leisurely, I-don't-give-a-shit-about-your-conflict-because-I'm-just-a-leaf kind of way. It's great for camouflage, and we confidently expect the character models to improve too. By the way, if you're sceptical about the ability to hide in the undergrowth, don't be. The way it works is disarmingly simple: a small eye icon in one corner of the screen will dim or brighten according to how well you're hidden. Easy, eh?

PUTTING YOUR LIFE ON THE LINE

Like so many of the latest squad-based titles, you aren't going to get the most out of *Jungle Storm* if you just sit there playing on your own. No, you need to stick your broadband adapter in the back of your black box and get

GIVE THAT GAME A FINE CUBAN CIGAR!

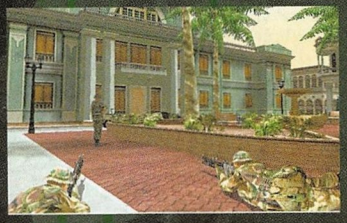
IF YOU THOUGHT WE'D COVERED ALL *GHOST RECON'S FEATURES*, HOW ABOUT...



It's not all about the rumble in the jungle: you'll also get the chance to explore some strangely deserted, dangerous city areas in Cuba and Colombia too.

POTENTIAL:

Squad fighting and cities go together like rum and pineapple juice.



Don't expect all your enemies to sit still doing their best lemon impression: cars, tanks and planes mean the fighting forces of darkness will take the battle to you.

POTENTIAL:

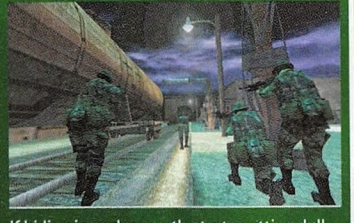
Since we can't drive 'em, vehicles will cause mucho trouble for soldiers.



As well as scoping out the big cities, you'll have to clear out caves that house swarms of pro-evil radicals. Just don't get claustrophobic back there, OK?

POTENTIAL:

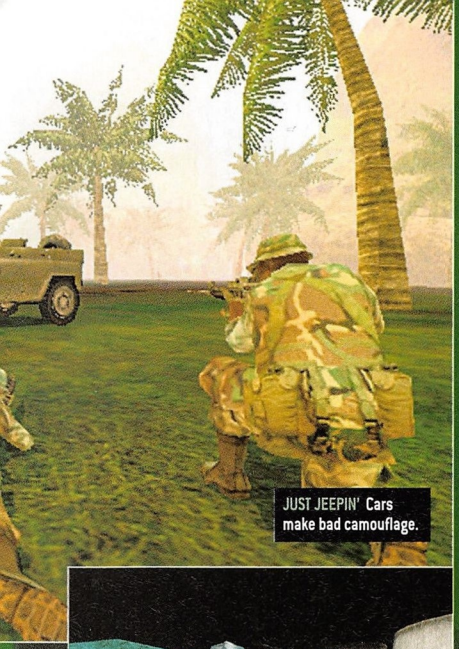
Caves make perfect enemy bases to infiltrate, so we're happy.



If hiding in undergrowth starts getting dull, then why not simply take on night missions and cloak yourself in darkness? The enemy won't have a clue!

POTENTIAL:

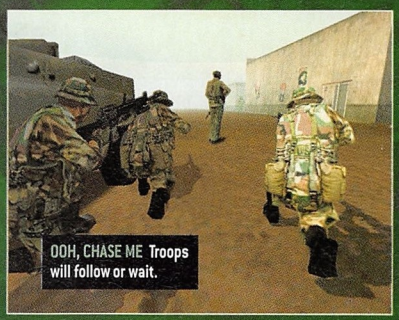
As long as there're shadows to skulk in, we'll be there.



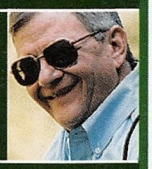
JUST JEEPIN' Cars make bad camouflage.



FLY BLIND Sabotage the plane and get out!



OOH, CHASE ME Troops will follow or wait.



THE TOM CLANCY PLOT GENERATOR

THIS IS HOW *GHOST RECON* CREATOR TOM CLANCY GETS HIS STORIES. TRY IT NOW.

In... a) Post-war Iraq ☐
b) Post-Communist Russia ☐
c) Postmodern Japan ☐

a... a) Tinpot Ukrainian dictator ☐
b) Twisted Asian Business tycoon ☐
c) Mad Colombian drugs baron ☐

gets his hands on...
a) Lethal nanotechnology! ☐
b) An incurable man-made virus! ☐
c) A deadly orbital satellite! ☐

Now, the...
a) CIA's top female assassin ☐
b) Vietnam vet on one last job ☐
c) President of the God Damn US of A ☐

...is the only person who can stop the destruction of the entire United Sta – sod it, the entire world! What they don't know is...

a) There's a mole in the White House! ☐
b) They've stolen our stealth planes! ☐
c) The monkey has the damn virus!
Clear the area! CLEAR THE AREA! ☐



OVER A BARREL Get away from the oil! Duh.



FIRE AT WILL Don't waste ammo out here.

inter-gaming with all your cyberfriends... or something. Alright, we do know that the vast majority of you have about as much interest in going online with PS2 as you have of microwaving your own genitals, but this just might change your mind. You'll control one individual member of a team, with different players being allocated the post of leader. That's right – you'll get to order around people you've never met. And never will, unless they don't mind you calling them a "spineless toe-rag son of a whore who couldn't shoot his own whore mother with a mother-shooting kit from two feet away". Actually, the folks who play Xbox Live play their *Ghost Recon* game more than any other single title. And we trust them. Even if we sometimes do call them tubby bitches. Well, they are, aren't they?

Talking of inter-console prejudice: if PC owners start striding up to you in the street (biros arranged neatly in their top pocket and glasses held together with tape) and call you a wanker for not being able to play the PC's *Ghost Recon: Island Thunder* game, you can smile, pull their shoes off and chuck said shoes down a well, safe in the knowledge that you actually can. You see, as a final bonus, every single *Island Thunder* campaign is contained within the *Jungle Storm* game in its own little hermetically sealed section. In other words, you're getting two games for the price of one. And you don't have to fumble with a beige box and squint over a monitor to play it, either. So it's all good. Anyone who wants to know what the brutal thrill of real battle is like should... well, they should join the army, obviously. The rest of us who want some in-depth strategic combat are well advised to hang around and praise Lordy Jesus all together, now. For the people behind *Ghost Recon* are giving you pearls.

FIRST OPINIONS

Ghost Recon: Jungle Storm has the potential to deliver the most accurate, tense and thrilling squad experience yet. We've still got some quibbles about its looks – which should be sorted out before we review it – and it's all quite intensely PC-ish, but the chances are we'll be giving this one top marks for stealth, realism and military muscle. Stay tuned for more on this very soon.

/JOFF BROWN



STAKE OUT Can you spot the two camo'd soldiers here? Right at the front.

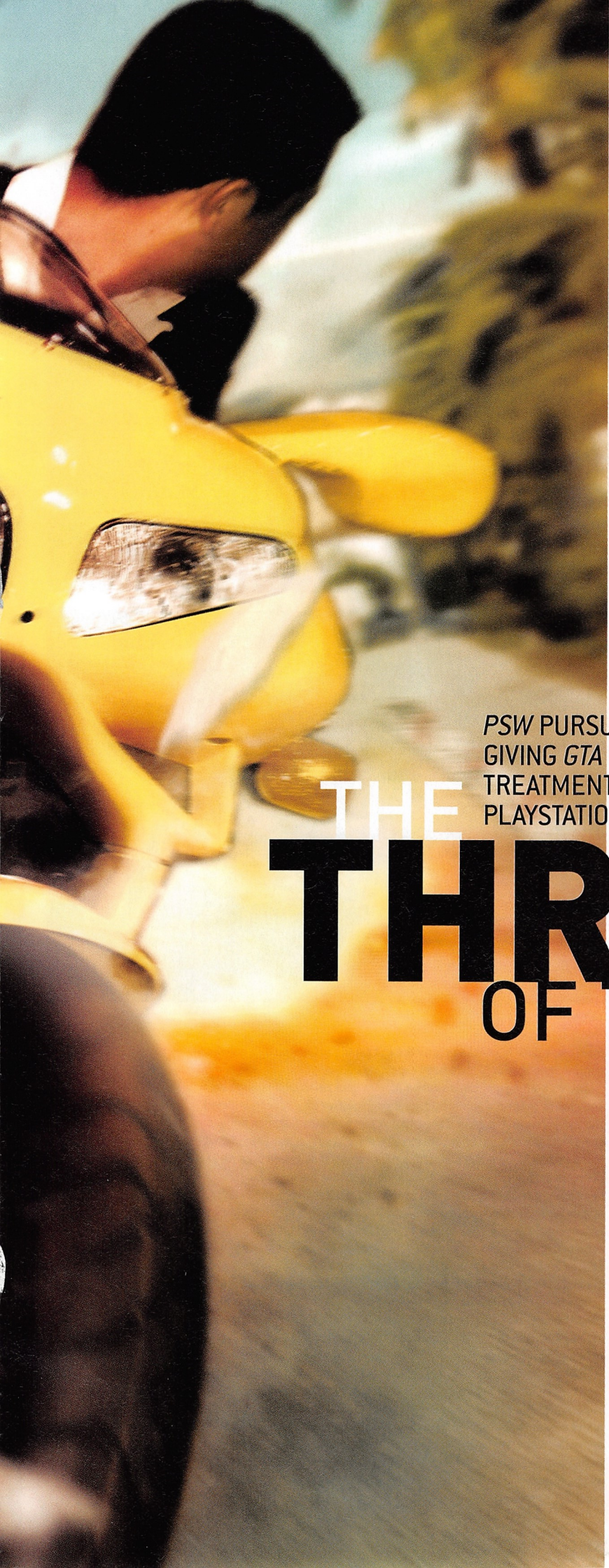


VALLEY NICE INDEED Look for all available cover, and watch for snipers.



BEACH NUT It may look pretty out there, but watch out for evildoers.





PSW PURSUES THE GAME THAT'S PLANNING ON GIVING *GTA VICE CITY* THE CONCRETE SLIPPER TREATMENT. READ ON TO FIND OUT WHY PLAYSTATION2 WILL NEVER BE THE SAME AGAIN...

THE THRILL OF THE CHASE

>> REFLECTIONS INTERACTIVE MAKE THINGS SO YOU CAN BREAK them. It's what they do best. They spend months painstakingly recreating the *Marie Celeste* with matchsticks so you can bound into the room in Wellington boots and kick it all to pieces. That's why we love them. And the level of destruction in *Driver 3* is ten times greater than that of *Driver 2*. Remember that footage of those football hooligans during the 1998 Soccer World Cup in France, where a sea of skinheaded buffoons unleashed a great wave of white plastic garden furniture over the heads of the local police? It's like that, only one car is doing the work of 15,000 sunburnt yobs. Watching your car gradually fall to pieces at the centre of this maelstrom is a surprisingly beautiful thing, particularly when it comes to the doors. They flap in the breeze after a couple of knocks, then catch on passing lampposts at 140km/h and are wrenched clean off. Bonnets crumple and peel away, panels scratch and scuff and windscreens shatter on impact. So if you take just one thing away from this world exclusive look at *Driver 3*, make it this: Breaking stuff is cool. *Driver 3* is about breaking stuff. *Driver 3* is cool.

The story is basic in the extreme. Loosely based on the movie *Gone in 60 Seconds* – a film so bone-headed that not only was Vinnie Jones able to star in it, he also understood it and probably could've written it – *Driver 3* has undercover copper, Tanner, attempting to drag down a gang of international car thieves from the inside, which is why you can hot-wire someone else's Lamborghini (or an approximation of a Lamborghini. None of the actual manufacturer names are in there) and grind it into a powder fine enough to be sneezed away into the ether >

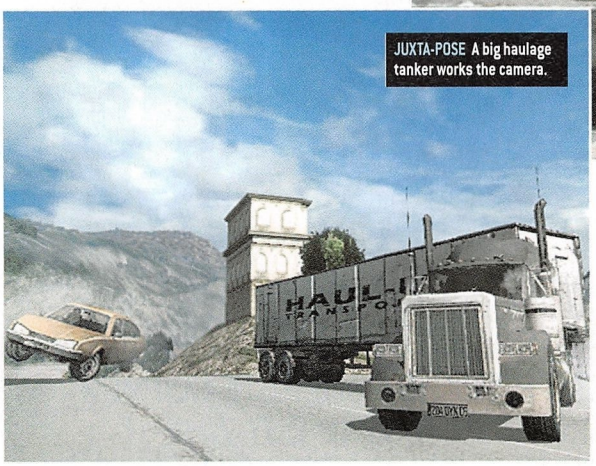
#01 NEW THINGS IN DRIVER 3 MORE DAMAGE



> Reflections has spent months improving the damage system. As well as writing off cars from the inside, you can now dismantle them by shooting away the panels with your machine gun until nothing is left.



BERET OF LIGHT It's a 2CV – could this be France per chance?



JUXTA-POSE A big haulage tanker works the camera.



BAD GRUB Take exception to the menu Tanner-style.

"WATCHING YOUR CAR CRUMBLE AT THE CENTRE OF A MAELSTROM IS A SURPRISINGLY BEAUTIFUL THING."

without having to feel bad about it. It's all for the greater good, see? You might be breaking the law in the short-term, but in the long-term you're making the world a nicer place for nicer people to live in.

In terms of structure, *Driver 3* is identical to the previous games. Each mission follows on directly from the one before it in a wholly linear fashion, meaning you'll be carrying out the orders set out in front of you on pain of Game Over and not cherry-picking tasks like you did in *GTA3*. Apparently, by sacrificing the freedom of the player in this way developer Reflections has been able to create a deeper, more integrated story that relates strongly to every aspect of every mission you're asked to carry out.

That's not to say that there's no scope for free thinking here. For while the objectives are all deeply etched in the hot tarmac downtown, the manner in which you achieve them is left entirely at your discretion. Allow us to relay to you the practical example given to us by Martin Edmondson, the driving force behind the series. Here goes: You're asked to steal an E-type Jaguar from a rival gang of car thieves. Trouble is, it's locked away inside a well-fortified compound and you've no way of getting in. The objective blurb advises you to tail one of the gang's trucks back to the depot and to follow it in as the electric gates open. So that's what you attempt to do – you find the truck and you begin the pursuit. Unfortunately, someone appears to have ratted you out, and almost immediately upon starting the mission, a van lurches in front of you from stage left, blocking off the road. You jump out of the car, shoot up the van driver and remove the obstruction. The pressure is then on to catch up with the truck before it arrives at the compound. You do this by breaking both the laws of physics and the laws of the Highway Code, eventually catching sight of it just as it pulls in to the main courtyard. You sneak in after the truck and are greeted by a hail of gunfire. They appear to have been expecting you.

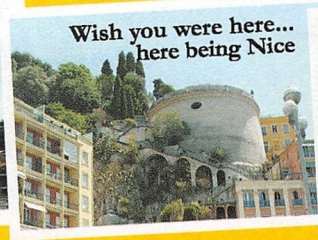
There's nothing you can do but vault from your perforated family saloon and engage them in a gunfight, even though you're horribly outnumbered. The two goons on the ground present few problems; the five men firing down from the balcony offer considerably more. A single, well-placed shot to the middle of the beam supporting their vantage point soon puts paid to them, their platform collapsing from under them like the legs of a heavyweight on the receiving end of an overhand right from Iron Mike. All that remains is for you to get into the Jag and drive it to safety. There is a problem, however. The car has to reach its final destination in perfect condition, otherwise the deal is off. And since you've made such a spectacle of the whole thing so far, dancing around and waving your gun in the air like an Iraqi soldier who's just found out that George Bush Jnr once almost died when he choked on a pretzel, you're going to have the police coming after you, and they're not going to think twice about thumping huge welts in that lovely bodywork. It'll be extremely tough, but certainly not impossible.

That's one way of doing it. You've gone in like a man and taken them on face-to-face, and kudos for that, but you've put yourself – and more importantly, the car – in serious peril. Unpleasant. Rewind to the beginning of the mission and we'll show you how things could've turned out in an alternate reality where you've been gifted with the capacity for lateral thinking of George Peppard and where everything always turns out exactly as you had planned. Here goes: You find the truck and you begin the pursuit. Unfortunately, someone appears to have ratted you out, and >

> MIAMI? NICE MARTIN EDMONDSON TALKS US THROUGH DRIVER 3'S THREE CITIES...



"Much of Istanbul is incredibly run down – ramshackle huts with corrugated iron doors and the like – but that's mixed with some incredible mosques. We had to be a bit careful that we didn't have any gunfights taking place in the mosques. You are able to drive into them though."



"A good choice because it's got both water and trees. The idea was to create something completely different from Miami, again for contrast. You've also got some beautiful architecture there, the rustic buildings, the history and the castles – it's all stuff that you wouldn't find in America."



"An obvious choice because the first *Driver* was set in Miami and we wanted Tanner to go back to his roots. We also wanted to show how much better the PlayStation2 is than the PSone and this allowed us to create a direct comparison. It's a great city to do because it's so diverse."

#02 NEW THINGS IN DRIVER 3 MOTORBIKES

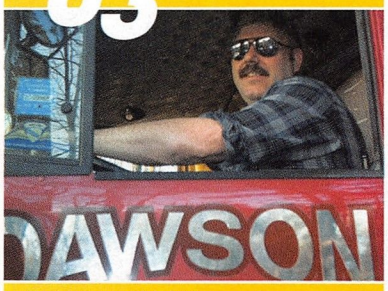


> Bikes make an appearance for the first time in the history of the series. Ducati and Harley Davidson-style two-wheelers compliment a tasty range of Japanese street bikes. You'll able be to shoot guns and drive at the same time.

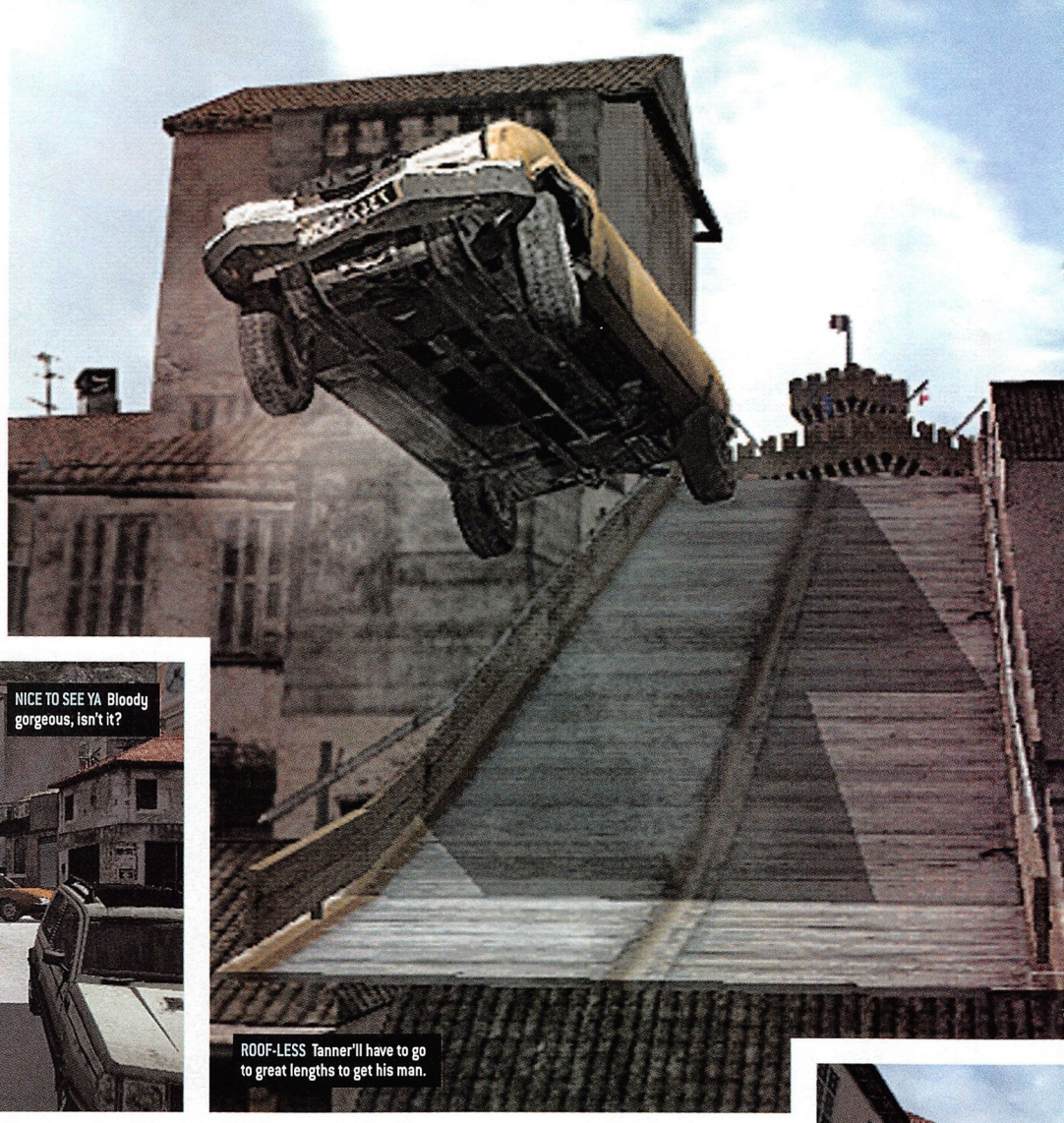


BEHEMOTH The vehicular equivalent of Bella Emberg.

#03 NEW THINGS IN DRIVER 3 ARTIC TRUCKS



> The biggest vehicle in the game by some considerable margin. The amount of damage you can do with an 18-wheeler is freakish, the police cars swarming around you like flies to be swatted away with a casual turn of the wheel.



ROOF-LESS Tanner'll have to go to great lengths to get his man.



NICE TO SEE YA Bloody gorgeous, isn't it?

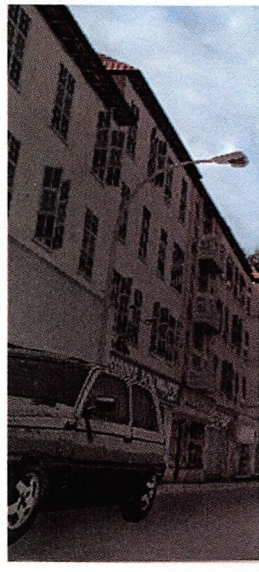
almost immediately upon starting the mission a van lurches in front of you from stage left, blocking the road off. You pull hard on the handbrake and slam your motor down the dusty path to your right. A couple of hundred meters later you come across a motorbike and, thinking that the street racer will help you catch up much quicker, decide to borrow it and to never bring it back. You force the machine down narrow streets at insane speeds, the motorbike screaming a warning of imminent spinal injury. Within seconds you've overtaken the truck and are standing in the middle of the road preparing an ambush. As it drives by you shoot the driver full in the face, causing the vehicle to slow and stop.

After removing his body you push the truck into first and begin driving it toward the compound. The goons at the other end, having no idea who you are, open the gates and wave you in. Rather than jump out and hot-wire the Jag in broad daylight, thus arousing suspicions and causing unnecessary aggravation, you instead open up the back of the truck and carefully load the motor onboard. You then drive back out of the compound in the direction of your final destination, both the police and the rival gang completely unaware that you're up to no good. Job done, paintwork intact. Laaaav-ley.

IN THE DRIVING SEAT

So, while the overall structure of the game is fairly rigid, the actual gameplay invites experimentation. Kind of like *Vice City* then. It's a comparison that Martin Edmondson bristles at: "*Driver 3* focuses on very different things to *Vice City*. You'd never call *Vice City* a car chase simulator. They're inevitably going to be compared because in *Driver 3* you can get out of the car and steal other vehicles, but I still don't think there's a rival to *Driver* when it comes to car chases. I'm much more comfortable comparing *Driver 3* to *The Getaway*." We ask him what he made of *The Getaway*, at which point he requests that we go "off the record". This makes us feel very important, almost like real journalists, as if we're dealing with a top-secret dossier about blow-jobs and Tony Blair. So we can't tell you exactly what he made of *The Getaway*. But we can tell you that the Reflections team learnt plenty from Team Soho's effort. Mainly when it came to compiling the design document entitled "What Not To Do". Case in point: the level design. For while the three cities – Miami, Nice and Istanbul (see panel for more) – are modelled accurately on the actual places, they're no slaves to realism.

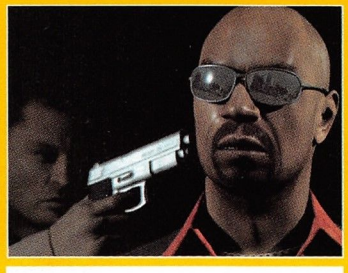
"The way we've approached the environments is as an authentic interpretation of the city. We didn't want 30 miles of open road to connect



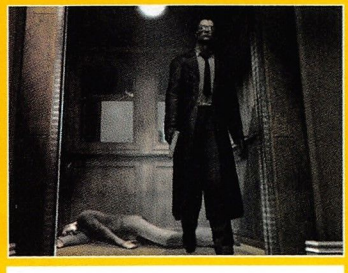
> GET ON THE SCENE *DRIVER 3* FEATURES OVER THREE-QUARTERS OF AN HOUR OF CUT-SCENES. FEAR NOT – THEY'RE SO PRETTY YOU



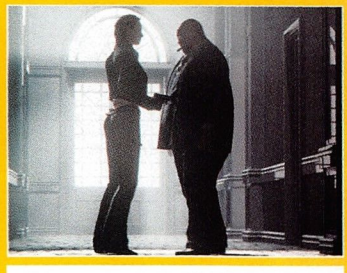
1. You remember Jericho from *Driver 2*, don't you? Slight grimace, black tie, always chewing granite? He's very hard.



2. Meet Lomaz. We don't know what his role is quite yet, but the chain and the sunglasses suggest 'attitood'.

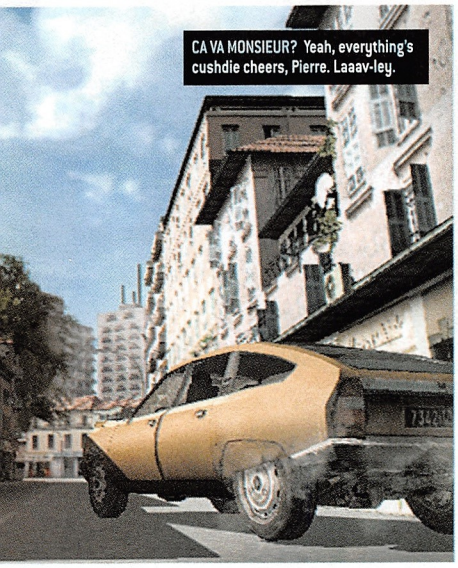


3. Never fall asleep in the company of a man in a floor-length leather jacket. Unless you like being bully-rammed.



4. The fat man pictured above is called Zeno, and he appears to be in a spot of bother. Will the lady puncture his gut?





CA VA MONSIEUR? Yeah, everything's cushdie cheers, Pierre. Laaav-ley.



GOOD GROUPING This guy must 'move like they do'.

St Tropez with Nice. We can bang on about the realism all day, but when you actually sit down and play, it'll bore people rigid. No-one wants to be sat on a motorway for 20 minutes." Hence any uninteresting sections of road – and, Lord knows, there are plenty of those in *The Getaway* – have been completely erased from the map, leaving us with compact environments where every cubic inch counts. We're told there are over 150 miles of main road in the game, along with countless back allies and side streets. Edmondson: "I really think people will be exploring these cities for month and months and months. I'm playing the game every day for many hours and I'm still finding little bits of Istanbul that I didn't even know were in there."

Not only are we impressed by the length of the levels, we're also impressed by their height. The French coastal resort of Nice, in particular, features some spectacular hills, the spectacular hills giving way to spectacular views and leaving the environments of rival games – *The Getaway*'s London, *True Crime*'s Los Angeles, *GTA*'s Vice City– looking spectacularly two-dimensional in comparison. Imagine if you'd been raised as the only male in an enclave of flat-chested women and you awoke one day to find a pommie page three-er looming over you, her disgustingly/magnificently over-stuffed fat sacks dangling inches from your nose like obese trapeze artists. Imagine how that would make you feel, to know at long last that the world wasn't flat. That's roughly what it was like for us when we were handed the controller and given the chance to explore Nice, a map that rises and rises like a giant boob, the church placed atop the hill acting as a massive and incredibly ornate nipple. Like so many of *Driver 3*'s new features – the shadows, the advanced physics, the improved smoke effects – the undulating terrain serves the purpose of making the whole thing feel that tiny bit more real. >



NICE Look forward to bustin' up France.

#04 NEW THINGS IN DRIVER 3 THE SPEEDBOAT

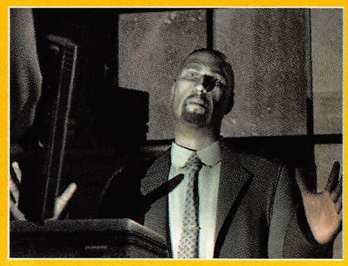


> Miami and Nice, the two maps with the most water, are littered with boats that can be stolen and abused until you're many miles clear of the crime scene. Expect something more satisfying than the equivalents in *Vice City*.

WON'T MIND SITTING BACK AND WATCHING THEM. WHAT FOLLOWS IS A SELECTION OF IMAGES FROM THE STORY SO FAR...



5. What are the odds on Tanner befriending a member of the gang he's supposed to be infiltrating? We'll give you 2/1 on.



6. The classic gangster face. "Eeeey," he's saying. "Quit bustin' my balls you fat f***." Or something similar.



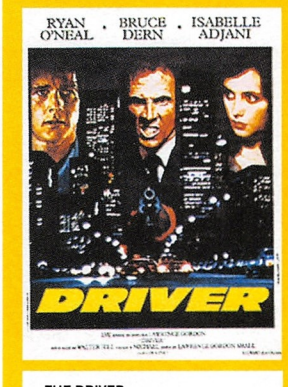
7. This be Baccus, another of the new faces. Tattoos mean tough, stupid and extremely violent. Watch out for him.



8. Don't make the bald man cry again. You've already done that twice today. Give him a break. Come on.

> THRILL OF THE CHASE

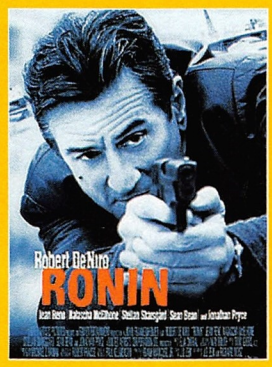
THE FIVE MOVIE CAR CHASES THAT HAD THE BIGGEST INFLUENCE ON THE MAKING OF *DRIVER 3*...



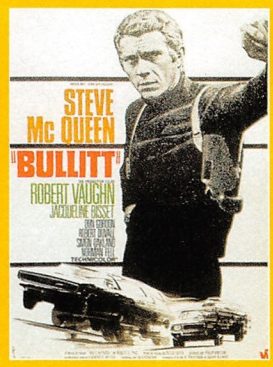
> THE DRIVER
Martin Edmondson's favourite ever pursuit comes from the Ryan O'Neal movie that inspired him to create the original game in the first place. It's the chase between the red pick-up and the silver Trans-Am.



> THE FRENCH CONNECTION
Influential in terms of the *Driver* games because it looks so real. Reflections is keen to recreate the sense of speed you get when Doyle ploughs through Chicago after a runaway subway train.



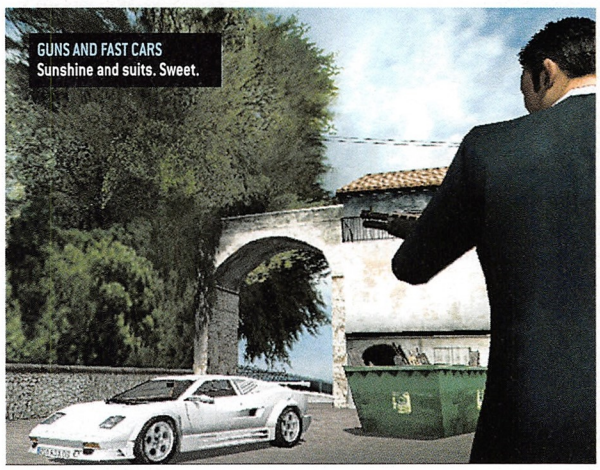
> RONIN
The finest chase of recent times. According to Hollywood lore, director John Frankenheimer wrote-off over 80 cars during the shoot. *Driver 3* has most definitely inherited its penchant for wanton destruction.



> BULLITT
In which McQueen – who insisted on doing much of his own driving – uses a makeshift runway in downtown San Francisco in an effort to get his Ford Mustang airborne. The hills in *Driver 3* could serve the same purpose.



THE BLUES BROTHERS
Jake and Elwood Blues take the entire Chicago police force on a ride through a local shopping centre, to the scene of *The French Connection*. Countless dumb yankee cops total their cars. Just like they do in *Driver 3*.


GUNS AND FAST CARS
Sunshine and suits. Sweet.


FILL HER UP Wonder what happens if you crash here?


NICE ONE The locations look stunning.

#05 NEW THINGS IN DRIVER 3 THE THRILL CAM

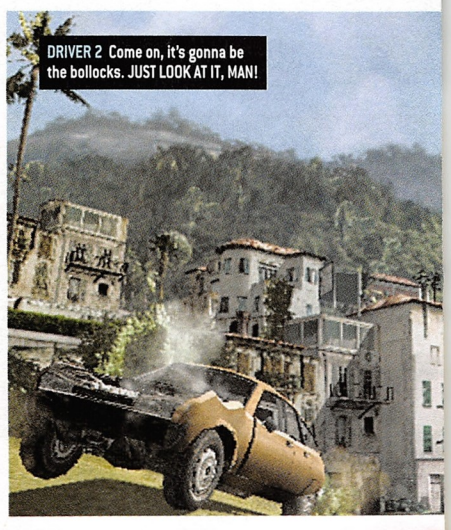


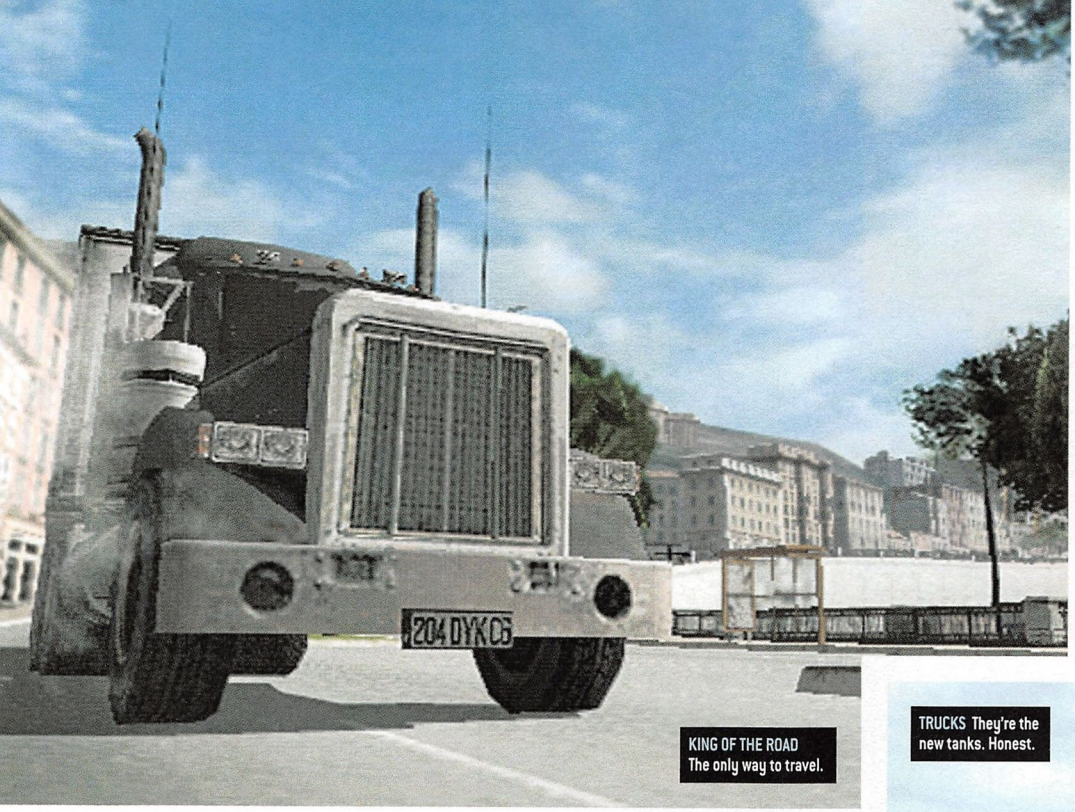
> An external view that can be triggered at any stage in the game. You can customise the Thrill cam by adding effects (black and white might look good) or by changing the position of the camera in relation to the car.

RIVERS OF BABYLON

There are three things that *Driver* wouldn't be *Driver* without. The first is a handbrake more powerful than God's older brother, the one who used to serve in the Territorial Army and who'll pay you a visit if you don't give Him his ball back. The second is a selection of cars with four loosened hubcaps. The third is the police. No rozzers, no car chases. It's thus unsurprising that Reflections has gone to extreme lengths to improve the intelligence of the men whose job it is to pursue you. Though the police will behave much the same in all three cities – the Turkish police are every bit as aggressive as the French police, who are every bit as aggressive as the American police – the chases will still be very different from city to city. "Because the road types are completely different in each of the three places, the tactics of the police change and so does the nature of the pursuit. You can't drive as fast on the roads of Istanbul as you can on the roads of Miami because they're a lot narrower, more tight and twisty streets. It's a bit slower, but because of the narrowness of the streets it feels just as quick."

To make things fair, you'll be given an extensive selection of weapons – sorry, vehicles – with which to outwit the police. *Driver 3* features over 80 vehicles, including the motorbike you stole earlier, a speed boat and an articulated lorry. The bikes are particularly impressive, having been lavished with exactly the same level of care and attention as the four-


DRIVER 2 Come on, it's gonna be the bollocks. JUST LOOK AT IT, MAN!



KING OF THE ROAD
The only way to travel.



TAN BROWN Don't see many of them these days.

#06 NEW THINGS IN DRIVER 3 THE WEAPONS



> *Driver 3* features ten weapons in all, including a couple of machine guns, a pump-action shotgun and a range of single-hand mini-guns. Apparently, the loading and repeat times have been accurately modelled.



TRUCKS They're the new tanks. Honest.

"THE FASTEST, BIGGEST, MOST EXCITING, MOST DESTRUCTIVE PS2 GAME WE'VE PLAYED FOR LONGER THAN WE'D CARE TO REMEMBER."



wheeled machines. You can pull wheelies, pop endos (for the benefit of those of you whose love of video games is such that you've never 'played out' on a BMX, that's a front wheelie), and tattoo road surfaces with thick black marks by unleashing thunderous wheelspins. The sense of speed when you're on the back of a bike approaching top speed, particularly when played in the first-person view, is nothing short of phenomenal. This must be how that poor mouse felt the night you strapped him to a firework and launched him down the high street. Poor bugger.

Slightly less energetic is the articulated truck, a machine characterised by a throaty horn that bellows, "I am Man. I am Truck Driving Man and the contents of my glove compartment are between me and my conscience. Now remove your car from the icy shadow of my 60-tonne penis extension (with conservatory) or I'll break you in half." It's a wonderful piece of work, particularly when you've hooked it up to a trailer for the full-on 18-wheel experience. Apparently a later mission has you using your lorry to transport a number of stolen cars, hopefully at some point allowing you to roll your cargo off the back and into the path of the following coppers.

When you've finished terrorising the good people of Miami or Nice or Istanbul, you'll be able to review all the footage in the Director mode, a luxury replay function that allows you to make short films. Reflections has added a couple of new options here, including an enhanced zoom option and a tracking camera that can be set up to move between any two points on demand. "Start here," you might tell the virtual cameraman, "and make sure to catch the wide-eyed fear of the patrons of that restaurant I just closed for refurbishment, then pan swiftly to follow my car as it hurtles on by."

Those of you with neither the time nor the inclination to fanny around in the editing suite have the option to cut to an external 'Thrill' camera during the game that calls to mind the view given to you when executing a jump in *Vice City*. Brilliantly, the more pressure you apply to the shoulder buttons, the slower and more exagerrated the replay becomes: really give it a squeeze and the world... slooows... sooooo... muuuuuuuuuch... thaaaaaaat... theeeeeee... soooooound... distooooooorts. Let it go again andeverythingspeedsbackup.

So that's Driver 3, the fastest, biggest, most exciting, most destructive PS2 game we've played for longer than we'd care to remember. The good news is, it looks more than capable of justifying every column inch of the hype it's certain to generate. And with the stench-trails of *Tomb Raider: The Angel of Darkness* and *The Getaway*, two big-name titles that sold plenty only to leave sour tastes in the mouths of thousands of casual players, still thick in the air, what we need right now more than ever are games that play as well as they sell. Like we say, that's *Driver 3*.

/ JON BROWN



> KANG BANG

Nick Kang's looking for a fight. He's got 240 square miles of LA to search. He'll find one.

"THE CITY OF DREAMS – GANGSTA, HOLLYWOOD, GLITZ-AND-TITS LA"

TRUE CRIME: STREETS OF LA

YOU LIKED *GTA: VICE CITY*? THEN GET READY FOR THE CITY OF ANGELS. BECAUSE *TRUE CRIME* IS NOTHING LESS THAN THE NEXT STEP....

> GENRE	ACTION
> DEVELOPER	LUXOFLUX
> PUBLISHER	ACTIVISION
> ETA	NOVEMBER
> ONLINE	NO

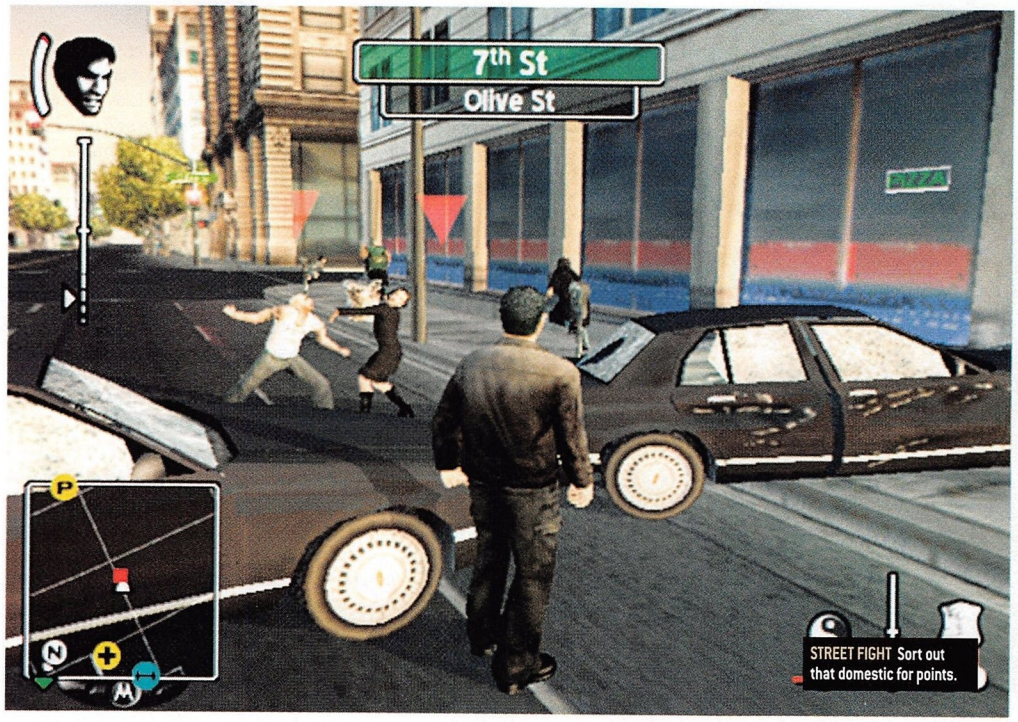
AT THE MOMENT, WE'RE JUST STANDING ON a street corner, watching life go by. A couple of hoodlums go past, walking tall and talking street. It's all very quiet here in central LA. A few cars pass, trees wave in the smoggy breeze. Then a call comes through on our cop radio. "There's a turf war between high-class hookers taking place on Beverly Boulevard. Active units respond." We dash out into the street in front of a car, forcing it to screech to a stop mere inches away. Jumping in and chucking out the driver, we speed through the traffic on the block. Up ahead, two bikini-clad, Uzi-toting girl gangs are swapping bullets on either side of the road. We aim our car straight at one, but they roll out of the way and run off. Jumping out of the car, we give chase on foot. One of the gun-loving hookers grabs a passer by as a human shield and starts shooting. We aim a single shot at her head with pinpoint accuracy and she falls down, instantly dead. That's justice, LA style. And it's a slice of action taken directly from *True Crime: Streets of LA*. Did we get you interested yet, or are you clinically dead?

True Crime blends story, missions and free-roaming action in a way never before seen. OK, in a way seen not so long ago in a couple of cities known as Liberty and Vice, but we'll get to that later. You play Nick Kang, a Chinese-american crazy cop. The Russian Mafia and the Triads are on a two-gang crimewave. Sorting it out will take an economy-sized helping of explosions. It doesn't matter how much damage you do, as long as you bring down the perps. By the end of even the smallest encounter, the whole area will be strewn with wreckage. Take it from us: it makes *Bad Boys 2* look like *The Lizzy MacGuire Movie*.

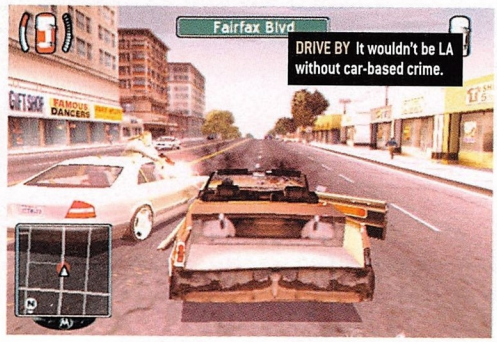
HE WAS PACKING HEAT BOSS, I SWEAR

So... are we reminded of any other big-name action franchises? Ones with the words 'Auto', 'Theft' and 'Grand' in? The answer, inevitably, is yes. *True Crime* does the *GTA* thing, and not in just a few ways either. The whole concept of the game, certainly the drive-and-shoot parts, is pretty much the same. This doesn't mean that *True Crime* isn't its own game, however. There's a ton of real differences, like the lengthier amount of time spent on interior missions and the emphasis on martial arts. Perhaps the biggest difference is that you're a cop here, and even in tinseltown, indiscriminate killing isn't allowed. Kill an innocent, and your karma goes down a point. Take out a crim without killing them and you'll get a point back. And solving crimes by chasing down perps seems to be as much fun as causing them.

If you kill indiscriminately then civil disorder rises. Eventually, of course, the cops will come after you too, but you can get away with a surprising amount of death before they do. Act all nasty and you'll go down your own branching storyline. Be good cop, and you'll... OK, we don't know what happens if you play nice, because we spent all our time roughing up peds on the street, causing immense, epic-sized pile-ups for absolutely no reason, picking fights with dangerous gangstas, and trying – in time-honoured fashion – to test the limits of the game by driving into ridiculous situations that caused civilians to die as if it was going out of fashion fast. We don't mind, because it meant we had to "infiltrate" a strip club and go, ahem, head-to-head with the evil stripper criminals there. Who said vice isn't its own reward?









GRAND THEFT AIKIDO?

THERE MAY BE SOME SIMILARITIES TO ROCKSTAR'S CRIME SERIES, BUT *TRUE CRIME*'S SO MUCH MORE. LOOK....



> GOOD COP, BAD COP

Be nasty and you'll influence the entire course of the story. Be nice, and you might have a chance to get it on with your glamorous lady partner. Sex or violence, sir?



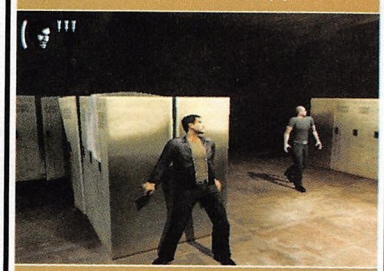
> MARTIAL ARTS

Combat in *True Crime* is complex, involving and fast. Learn new moves off your dojo-owning brother and you'll be pulling off Jet Li-style moves in no time.



> STREET CRIME

Every minute or so, a new "incident" erupts on the streets around you. Could be domestic violence, a knife fight, a mugging or a full-on gang war. Solve them for extra cop points.



> INDOOR ACTION

True Crime's inside environments are incredibly detailed and realistic... and almost completely smashable. Expect gunfights in saunas, nightclub rumbles and more.



TRUE CRIME: STREETS OF LA FACT

> STREETS OF CRAZE
The maddest street crime yet? A barny between two chefs armed with meat cleavers. They call it la-la land....

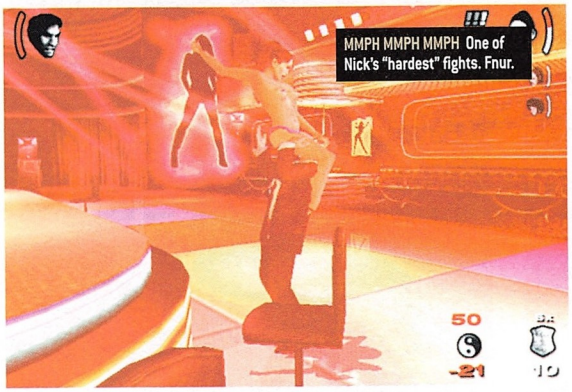
> WHAT'S MY MOTIVATION?
Nick's cop father died in tragic circumcumstances. We smell a back-story and revenge plot coming up.

> SEXPLOITATION FLICK
As you can see from the shots, *TC* is one of the raunchiest, rudest games we've seen for quite a while. Goody.

> SLLOOOWW MMMOTIIONNN
For kick-ass moves and split-second shooting sequences, time stretches out. Yes, it's Bullet Time. So?



"240 SQUARE MILES OF CITY FILLED WITH DEAD-BEAT, LOW-LIFE SCUM. JUST LIKE YOU."





WHAT THE MAKERS SAY

"TAKE PART IN EXPLOSIVE GUN BATTLES WITH DOUBLE-FISTED FIREPOWER, DEVASTATING MARTIAL ARTS BRAWLS, AND HIGH-SPEED SHOOTOUTS ACROSS 240 SQUARE MILES OF ACCURATELY RECREATED LA."

CAUGHT IN THE CROSSFIRE

True Crime looks the business. Every pedestrian is highly detailed. Cars doesn't just buckle when they're hit – paint cracks, windshields splinter into safety glass, bonnets wrinkle as if you'd just driven into a gigantic pile-up. Which, this being *True Crime*, you probably have. As for the city itself, it breathes LA. Not the real LA, you understand, the grimy place approximately 5,500 miles away. No, we mean the city of your dreams – gangsta, Hollywood, Glitz-and-Tits Los Angeles. You know this place because you've seen the movies. *Lethal Weapon*, *Pulp Fiction*, *Face/Off*, *Heat*.... You've seen the gunfights, you've watched the car chases. Well, *True Crime* is pretty much just like that. The streets may be mapped down to the last piece of gum on the sidewalk, but we don't think there's quite as much crazy crime in the real LA. If there is, then we'd like to change our California holiday to somewhere quieter, like Afghanistan.

There're 240 square miles of city, from the beaches to the Hollywood hills. You'll recognise the endless, somehow ominously nondescript suburban condos. The Oakland sprawl. Venice Beach of *Baywatch* fame. The scummy chic of Sunset Boulevard. It's all laid out here for you to explore, and it's filled with deadbeat, low-life scum. A bit like you, really. Because Nick Kang a) is a loose cannon, b) was suspended for "doing things his way" and has only just got back on the force, c) has a love/hate relationship with his beautiful female partner, and d) *he's a cop on the edge, dammit*! All of which gives you some tiny excuse for the immense amount of carnage you cause on LA's roads, sidewalks and nightclubs. That's right, the action frequently spills in from the street into indoor locations like warehouses, shooting ranges, strip clubs and gyms. There's a pause for loading, so don't expect instant gratification, but you won't mind once you see the lustre on each and every interior. These locations form the perfect place for Nick Kang to pull off his impressive kung fu moves. Kang relies on his Jeet Kune Do-alike style to take down perps, and he can learn new moves in his brother's sparring workouts. It brings Kang up to true action-hero status.

STARS IN YOUR EARS

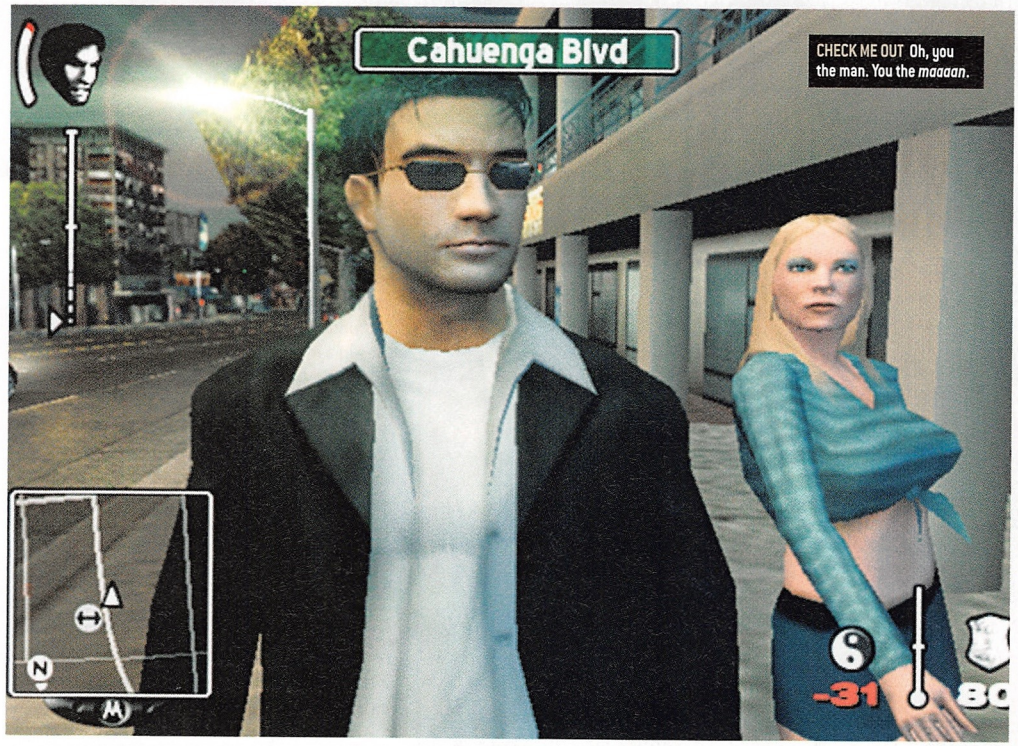
As if to show just how much money the makers of *True Crime* had to throw around, they've only gone and kitted it out with a host – yes, a full host – of celebrity voices. Corpse-faced hard man Gary Oldman plays both a CIA operative and a mafia boss, and *Reservoir Dogs* torture junkie Michael "Mr White" Madsen is a dodgy cop. Christopher Walken, the man who has never yet played a character without the taint of howling insanity, is cast here as the amiable old-timer who overlooks Nick's progress in the force. Mind you, with the King of Kook doing the voiceover, we wouldn't be surprised if he goes la-la crazy psycho halfway through the game.

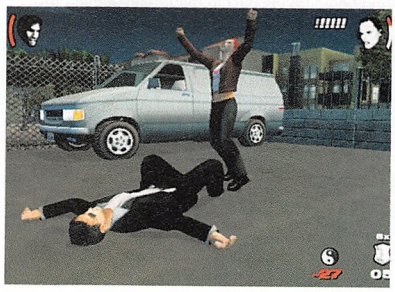
In short, *True Crime* has had just about everything going for it: martial arts, guns, cars, exploration, story... it's all here, wrapped up in as pretty a package as you could ask for. But can all these parts stick together to form a top game, or is *True Crime* going to end up a true mess? The review's here next month.

FIRST OPINIONS

We think *True Crime*'s probably going to be awesome. Find out next month just how great it is. We'll even play good cop to see what happens. If we really, really have to....

/ JOFF BROWN







MURDER ON THE DANCEFLOOR Yess! We've been waiting to use that caption for ages. Yess!





TRUZZUE 2 THA CRIZZIME GOTS THA MAD BEATZ, G!

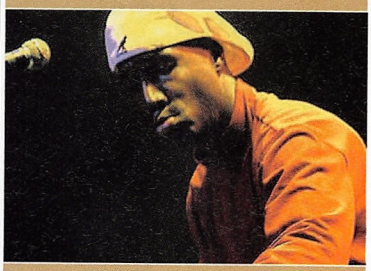


TRANSLATION FROM GANGSTA: *TRUE CRIME* CONTAINS MANY ENJOYABLE MUSICAL COMPOSITIONS. OVER 50, IN FACT. THE MOST EVER. INCLUDING:



> NERD

WHO? Pharrell Williams and crew, currently the hottest producers/artists on Earth.
LIKES: Tasty women kissing each other in the *Lapdance* video. And Justin Timberlake.



> GRANDMASTER FLASH

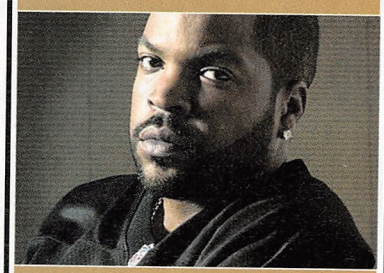
WHO? One of the oldest of old-school rappers. A rap-o-saurus, if you will.*
LIKES: Not standing close to the edge. He might lose his head, you know....

*Or velociraper. Sorry.



> SNOOP DOG

WHO? Made a track of his own for the game. Bless his little dogg heart.
LIKES: Saying things like "Shizzle dizzle nizzle, bizzle." Maybe they're, like, magic spells?



> ICE CUBE

WHO? Original gangsta rapper, started out with NWA then enjoyed monster solo success.
LIKES: Not having to use his AK. That would make it a good day, it would.



> I'M BOARD
Underground features thousands of new boards, none of which look like this.

"SMOKE CRACK WITH A HOOKER IN THE BACK OF A STOLEN POLICE CAR."

TONY HAWK'S UNDERGROUND

THE CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD IS SENT AWAY ON GARDENING LEAVE, GIVING YOU THE CHANCE TO TAKE A LEADING ROLE IN HIS LATEST GAME.

> GENRE	SPORTS
> DEVELOPER	NEVERSOFT
> PUBLISHER	ACTIVISION
> ETA	NOVEMBER
> ONLINE	YES

TONY HAWK UNDERGROUND IS AROUND 23.3% more street than *Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 4*. But how street is that? And how far underground is Tony prepared to go? Well, not quite the full six feet, otherwise he'd be dead, and that would be suicide news from a business standpoint as far as Activision is concerned. And he's not quite five feet under either, for although your skate punk lives in a messy bedroom located on the wrong side of the tracks, he's still very much against drug-dealing and petty thievery. A safe four feet then. Which is deep enough to be able to listen to hip-hop in expensive trousers in the company of shoplifting friends who swear and who call their parents by their first names – but not quite deep enough to smoke crack with a hooker in the back of a stolen police car.

It begins with a tap on the window. Your character, customisable to a ridiculous degree now that faces can be scanned in and pirate hats, fart-knocker beards and tattoos can be added, is interrupted from tampering with his skateboard by a close friend. Apparently Chad Muska is in town. Game begins. You move out onto the street and begin taking part in mini-tasks similar to those found in the previous four *Tony* games. Retrieve five pieces of stolen skateboard scattered over the city. Score 10,000 points to impress the locals. Perform a sequence of tricks on command. Succeed in enough of these and you and your character will move onto the next narrative chunk, which has Muska finally arriving for his demonstration. This is how the story in *Underground* works, by grouping together an assortment of missions into a building block of the ongoing story. The plot is very loose in a *Grand Theft Auto 3* kind of a way – a large percentage of your tasks have nothing to do with your rise from the slums of New Jersey to the champagne-filled sauna of Famousness at all – but it succeeds in kneading the levels together into a pleasantly doughy, malleable whole.

"I'M SORRY. THERE'S BEEN A CAR ACCIDENT." Things go well. Muska is impressed by your loose-limbed display of aerial foolishness and gives you a new board. And then you accidentally walk in front of a driving mission and your enjoyment is killed on impact. Frankly, the car sections are lousy. We always knew they would be. The handling is plain wrong (as one *PSW* wag pointed out, it feels as though you're driving a massive skateboard), the physics are way off and, presumably due to the fact that you're driving around areas designed first and foremost for far smaller vehicles, the tracks feel cluttered and square. Immediately after that you experience your first on-foot mission, which has you creeping through town to recover a skateboard from some smackheads. Again, lousiness personified and wearing bad shoes.

Leading us to conclude that the world would be a far better place if the *Tony Hawk's Underground* developers had never played *Grand Theft Auto 3*. If we could go back in time with a shotgun, a floor-length leather jacket and a terrifying scowl and find the shop assistant who sold developer Neversoft their copy of *GTA3*, we would. Sadly we can't. Apart from anything, we're all vegans. A floor-length kaftan just wouldn't look the same. You take our point. When your character is skating, *Underground* is a staggering work of leg-breaking genius. When your character is >



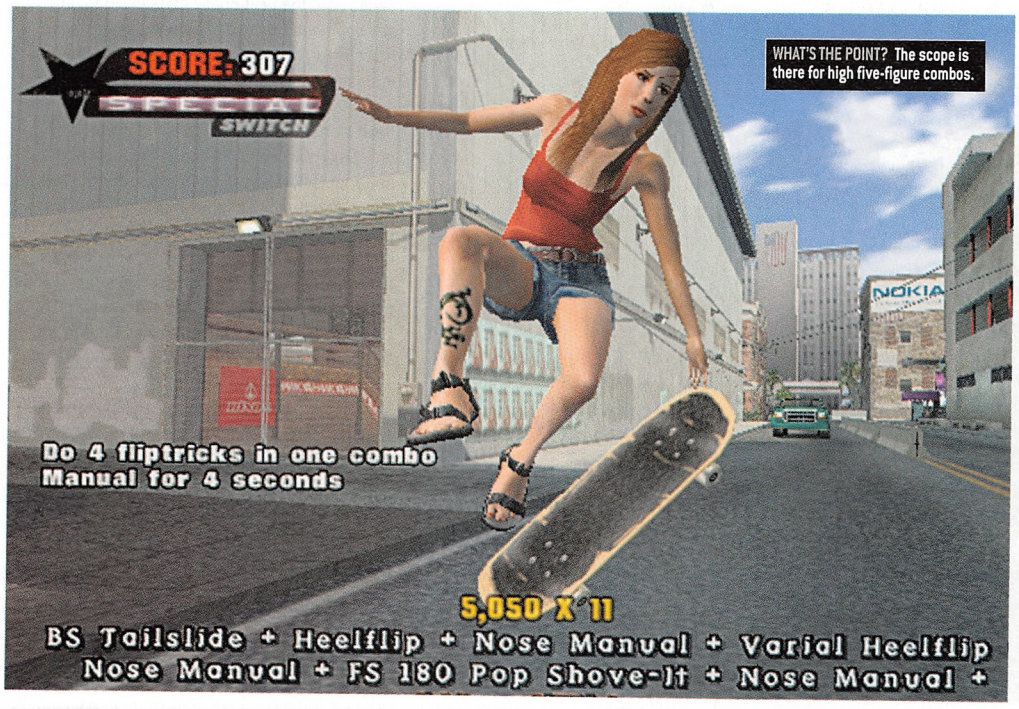
THE MANHATTAN TRANSFER Behold the best caption in *PSW* history. What do you mean you don't get it?



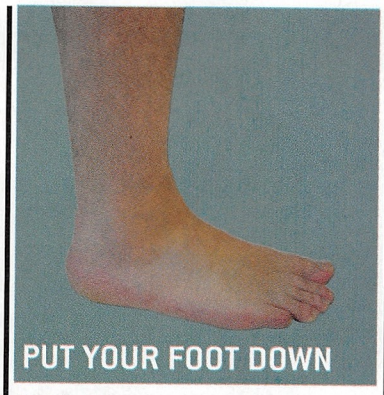
JOYLESS RIDE The cars bits are slightly pathetic.



UNFAIR COP This chap wants you to perform some favours.

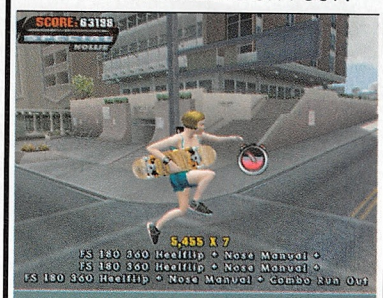


WHAT'S THE POINT? The scope is there for high five-figure combos.



PUT YOUR FOOT DOWN

WHAT CAN YOU DO WHEN YOU JUMP OFF YOUR BOARD AND TAKE TO THE STREETS ON FOOT?



> CONTINUE YOUR COMBO!
You can get off your board at any time by pressing L1 and R1 at the same time. Do so during a combo and you'll have until the counter runs down to get back on your board and carry on.



> SWING FROM THE ROOFTOPS!
On foot you can jump onto rooftops and monkey-dangle across telephone lines to reach items, ramps and areas that otherwise would be out of bounds. It's all a bit *Tomb Raider* if we're honest.



> HANG AROUND IN THE SHADOWS!
A small handful of the missions ban you from using your board and force to sneak your way through the playing area avoiding the roaming sentries. *Metal Gear Solid* gone wrong.



TONY HAWK'S UNDERGROUND FACT!

> LEGENDS OF THE FALLING OVER
A host of name skaters turn up to make cameos to teach you new tricks and to hand down old equipment.

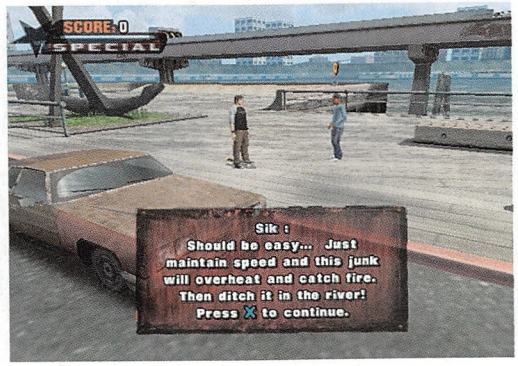
> FACE IT
You can change the faces of all civilians and write lines of dialogue for them to recite. Gay jokes at the ready.

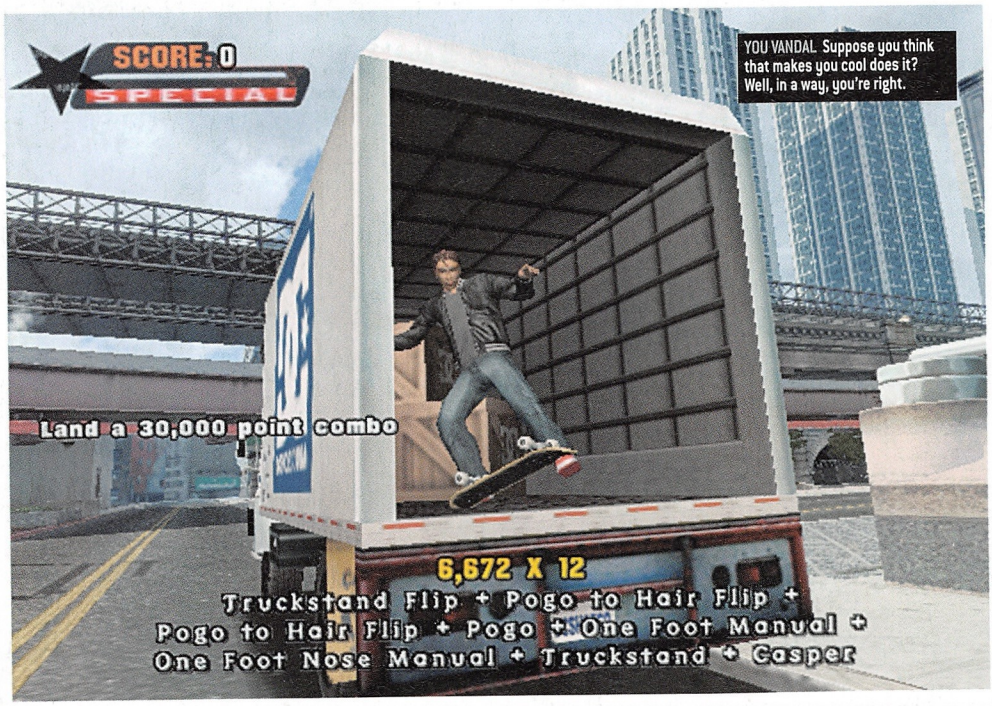
> PLAY BRIDGE
The first level ends with you making a ramp, then grabbing the back of a car and catapulting yourself over a bridge.

> FASTER, FASTER, FASTER
Underground plays much faster than *Tony 4*. Even so, veterans won't take long to get back into it.



"OLD HIGH SCORES WILL BE SMASHED LIKE FALLING POPADUMS."





WHAT THE MAKERS SAY

"WE'VE COMPLETELY REBUILT THE GAME. YOU'VE NOW GOT FAR MORE FREEDOM TO MOVE THROUGH THE WORLD WE'VE CREATED, PLUS THIS IS ONE OF THE MOST CUSTOMISABLE VIDEOGAMES YOU'LL HAVE EVER PLAYED."

either running or driving, it isn't.

Fear not, for even two Achilles' heels cannot hamper *Tony Hawk's* inevitable march to greatness; in spite of all this we still can't stop ourselves from playing *Underground* at this moment in time. And that's because the skateboarding – the heartbeat of the game – is, as ever, exceptional. The levels are more forgiving than the rather spiky *Tony 4* offerings, allowing far greater scope for the big combos. The fact that you can jump off your board, jog to a better vantage point, jump back on and continue the combo you were midway through also helps. So much so, in fact, that we confidently predict personal bests and high-scores racked up on previous Tony games will be smashed like falling popadums within hours of your first foray *Underground*.

I FOUGHT THE LAW

Once you've cleared New Jersey, convincing the owner of your local skate store to give you a sponsorship deal, you make for Tampa with the intention of taking part in a big-money competition. On the way, you get pulled over by the fuzz. Apparently you've got a faulty tail-light. The policemen, a wry smile wandering slowly northwards across his crumpled face, tugs on his belt and suggests that maybe if you perform a few "favours" for him he'll let you go. We've seen this situation countless times before – a redneck southern cop with a hard-on for sex and humiliation takes out decades of self-loathing on the rear-end of a naïve out-of-towner – but luckily for you he means actual favours ("Get your hands on some donuts boy.") and not sexual favours ("Put your hands up my hairy donut boy.") Four feet underground and no more. From here you move into central Tampa and enter into your first actual competition. And so it goes, your profile within the skate scene rising and rising with every passing tailgrab.

Underground is a fine game indeed, one that we confidently predict will move the *Tony Hawk* series onto the next phase of its evolutionary development. Our love affair with *Underground* has already reached an almost unbearable intensity, even before we've been sent the final game to review. To give you some indication, the dead skin harvested from blisters accrued over one day's play would be enough to feed all the starving children in all of Africa for the next ten years. And there's so much more to it than just the single-player story game. Tricks can be created, skate-parks designed and challenges issued, meaning gamers with fertile imaginations and time to spare have all the tools required to piece their own game together. Astounding.

Admittedly, we wish there was a way of wiping *Underground* clean of *GTA3*'s greasy fingerprints, a way to erase the driving and walking missions from both our and our PS2's memory, but that's never going to happen. We'll all have to just have to grimace and bear it. Three minutes of concentrated suffering has to be worth a lifetime of happiness though doesn't it? Hate to say it, but we won't be able to say for sure until next month.

FIRST OPINIONS

As the curtain comes down on our preview, we rise to our feet like the Nazi officers at the end of *Escape to Victory* to whole-heartedly applaud developer Neversoft for successfully reinventing the *Tony Hawk* series. Because, in spite of *Underground*'s flaws, it would seem that at the fifth time of asking they may well have produced a near-perfect skateboarding game. And that's a considerable achievement.

/ JON BROWN

GOING UNDERGROUND A HANDY POCKET GUIDE TO *TONY HAWK'S UNDERGROUND*



> FACE PLACE
Before you begin you must create your skater. Those who don't have either the inclination or the resources to scan their face into the game can sculpt a visage manually.



> YOUR BEDROOM
And into the actual game. That's the character you've just created about to be informed that opportunity is finally knocking. Get ready to meet Chad Muska.



> GRIMY BACK ST.
From there you move out into New Jersey, battling local drug dealers and carrying out favours until you've gathered up the confidence to approach Muska himself.

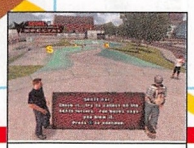


> OUT OF TOWN
Once you've impressed the visiting professional you're off to Manhattan to make a promo video. You'll need to hang onto the back of this car to catapult yourself over the bridge.

> TESTICLE INJURY & CASTLE



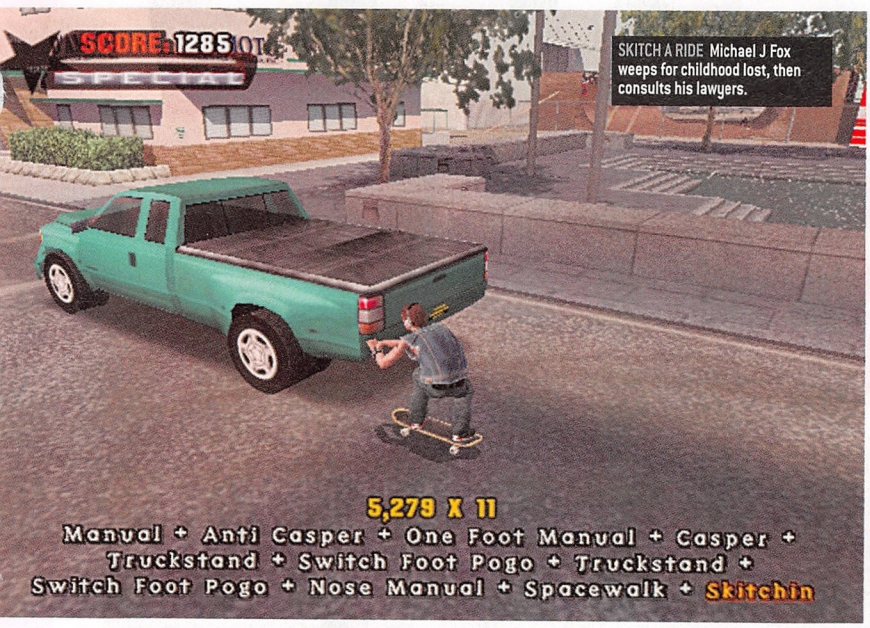
> MOVE CENTRAL
Creating new tricks is remarkably easy. Add extra flourishes and the number of points awarded will increase in proportion to the danger that you'll fall off your board.



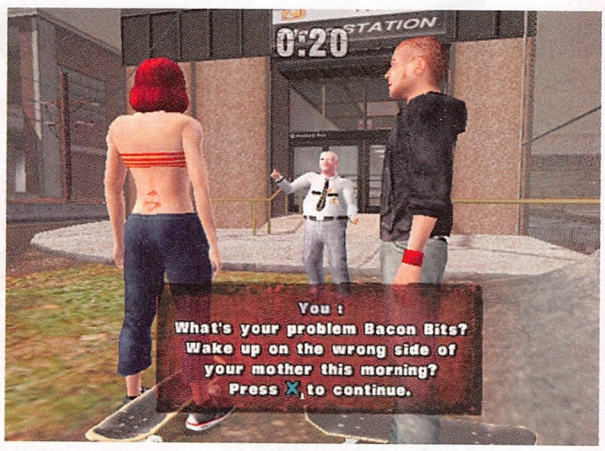
> YOUR OWN SKATEPARK
When you've finished with their game, time to make your own. In *Underground* you can create your own challenges as well write the entire script.

> RUPTURE PARK

> SPRAINERS LANE



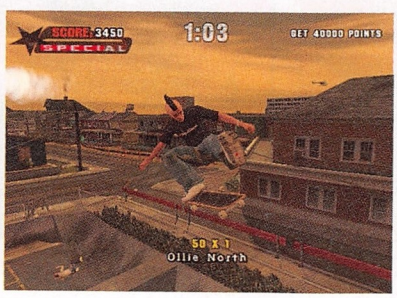
SKITCH A RIDE Michael J Fox weeps for childhood lost, then consults his lawyers.



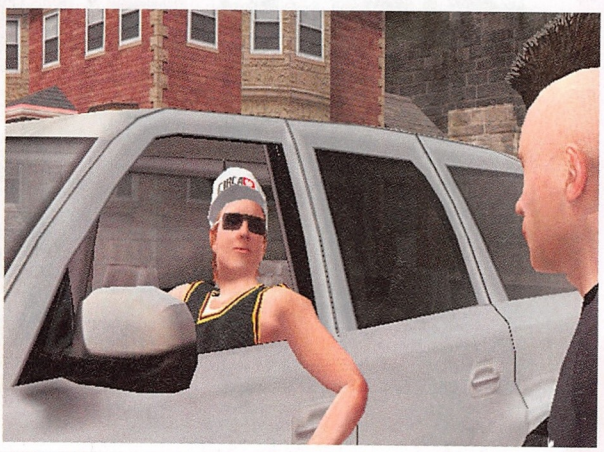
URBAN LEGEND It wants to be "street" so badly but it falls just short. "Bacon bits"? How cute.



BS 360 + SCRAMBLED + EGGS Try to do too much and you'll fall.



SMALL TOWN BLUES Your home town is a complete dump.

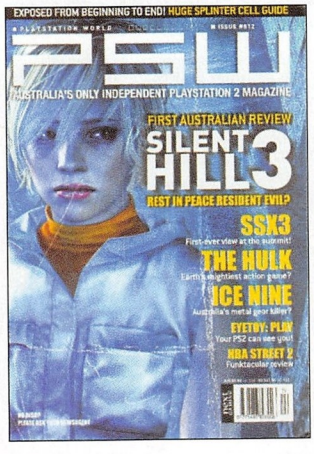


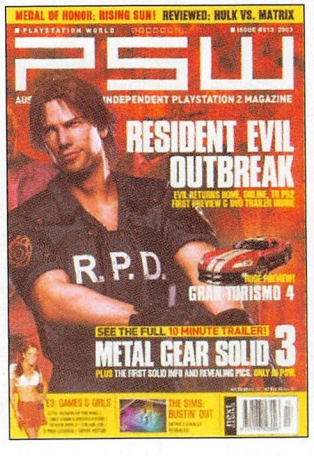
HANGING (WITH) CHAD He's famous. That's why he's wearing shades in a car with tinted windows.

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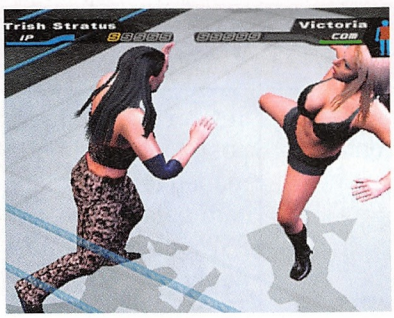


THE SHOW'S OVER "Smell my freshly-shaven pits you fool."




STAR AND BRAS That's coming off. Or at least it better be.





WWE SMACKDOWN! HERE COMES THE PAIN

PSW MUST BUY

SEE IT ON THE DVD

SMACKDOWN! HAS EVOLVED. IT'S SIMPLER. IT'S BETTER. IT'S THE BEST WRESTLING GAME YET MADE. HERE'S WHY YOU NEED TO GET INTO IT.

> TYPE	FIGHTING
> PLAYERS	1-6
> OUT	NOVEMBER
> PUBLISHER	THQ
> PRICE	$99.95
> DEVELOPER	YUKE'S
> ONLINE	NO

WELCOME! WELCOME TO THE FOURTH annual *PSW* review of the new *SmackDown!* game. Once again, for your reading pleasure, we'll be tramping out the same old captions about men kissing, making childish references to screen captures where it looks like two girls could possibly be feeling each other's arses and breasts, and no-doubt eventually listing in a fairly serious tone all the new features this year's *SmackDown!* has that last year's *SmackDown!* didn't, before coming to some sort of vague and ill-thought out conclusion as to whether this one is better than the last one.

In fact, if we printed last year's *SmackDown!* review with the names changed around a bit, most of you probably wouldn't notice. Except, and here's a shock only matched in size by Vince McMahon's testicular fortitude, this year's *SmackDown!* is incredibly different to the game which we played a mere 12 months ago. In short, it's better. It's slightly less short, it's more accessible, it looks better, it's faster, and Goddammit it's about 20 times more fun.

Because *SmackDown!* creators Yuke's has ditched the serious, look-how-realistic-it-all-is approach and gone for something more arcadey, something people with no knowledge of wrestling can enjoy and something we enjoy. That's great news. That's like scientists discovering that eating takeaway pizza protects


RIGHT ROYAL RUMBLE More men, same detail. Good work, PS2.


TRISH GOES DOWN And there's nothing we like more than that.


NO! NOT MY... HAIR The girls all have this head-slapping move.

MEET YOUR MATCH

THE TIP OF THE FIGHT-OPTION ICEBERG. WE COUNTED 23 MORE.



FIRST BLOOD

Brutal. Make your opponent bleed before he makes you bleed. If you've ever been to a pub in Nottingham on a Saturday night, you know what to expect.
HOW MUCH FUN? A drunken roller-coaster ride.



BRA AND PANTIES

Sorry mate, ladies only. Two girls, in skimpy clothes that are about to get skimpier. In fact, they're about to get non-existent. Press buttons fast to tear.
HOW MUCH FUN? A play fight with the girlfriend that ends in sex.



LADDER

The belt dangles in the middle of the ring. You beat your opponent until they can't stand, whip out the ladder, climb it and grab the belt to win it. Classic WWE.
HOW MUCH FUN? Getting your car to go up to 190km/h.



BRA AND PANTIES!

In which two ladies fight to rip each others' outer layers off until they're just in their sexy undies. You should see the tops stretch. It's comedy genius.
HOW MUCH FUN? Jelly-wrestling with a coked-up girl group.



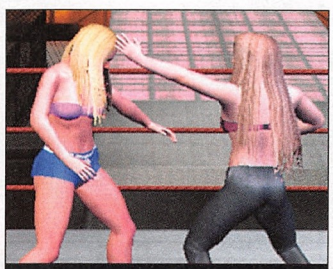
THREE STAGES OF HELL

A longer challenge, best suited to two-player challenges. Three match types, three fights, first to two winds, wins. More interesting, takes a while, fun.
HOW MUCH FUN? Running down a steep hill really fast.



BRA AND PANTIES!!

A new match type, the Bra and Panties fights let you tear off the shirts and trousers and/or skirts of your lady opponent. They end up virtually nude.
HOW MUCH FUN? A barrel of monkeys in zero gravity.



IRONMAN

A ten-minute challenge to score as many pins on your opponent as possible. Hurt them, make them dizzy, then fire in for a quick couple more.
HOW MUCH FUN? Experimenting with grandma's medication.



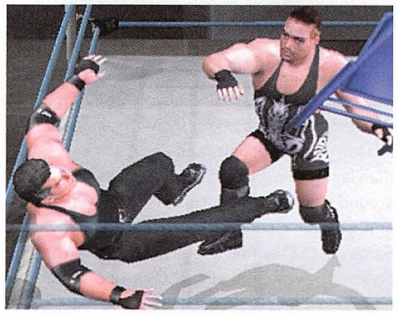
BRA AND PANTIES!!!

The Bra and Panties match features two female wrestlers. Here, you beat your opponent until they are weak, then grab their clothes and attempt to rip them off.
HOW MUCH FUN? A tickling match with a feathered octopus.

"YOU COULD TRAIN A DOG TO PLAY SMACKDOWN! IN A COUPLE OF HOURS, PROVIDING ITS PAWS WERE SMALL ENOUGH."

you from ever getting cancer and makes you live to be a thousand. This year, anyone, even someone who has no idea who The Rock is or what the thing he does with his elbow is, can pick up *Here Comes the Pain* and enjoy it.

They've simplified everything. Gone is the long, slightly bewildering array of options that once greeted you. In its place are five menu choices – Season, Create, Options, Credits and Exhibition – from where you get in and start the fighting. Better still, once you're in and playing, *Here Comes the Pain* feels twice as fast as last year's game, with more mobile characters skipping faster about the ring and firing off their moves in double time. Honestly, going back to last year's *SmackDown!* would be like swapping your trainers for a pair of tenth-century diving boots that have been encased in concrete and bolted onto railway sleepers. This is much faster. This is, therefore, much better.



NEW METAL The so-called "steel" chair claims another victim.

Wrestling games – last year's PlayStation2 *SmackDown!* included – usually boil down to two men lumbering slowly around each other in big circles, occasionally slapping each other. Not this one. The X button attacks, be it punches, kicks, stamps on the head or elbow drops. Press X and a direction button to do your special moves. That's how simple it is nowadays; repeat the above with the circle button to do throws and holds. It's so simple that the square button doesn't perform any attacks at all, and is saved for picking up chairs, ladders, sledge hammers and tables. You could train a dog to play *SmackDown!* in a couple of hours, providing its paws were small enough to let it press the individual buttons. We like it. People that like *Tekken* won't like it very much, but that's their fault for being all hissy. They're missing out.

ONCE, THERE WAS A FULLY WAXED MAN

Also, the Season mode has been axed, torn apart, simplified and therefore made into something that's fun to play instead of the usual chore of finding something to do or randomly bumping into a man for a chat. The new Season mode now gives you a simple list of what to do. You have six choices. Move lets you chat with a wrestler or manager in a backstage locations. ShopZone is where you spend the dollars earned by winning matches. Match is the match (told you it was simple). Attributes show you how many skill points you've earned through fighting, and there's a Profile for seeing who holds what title in the game and a Stable section for choosing which characters are Good and Bad. The Season is more straightforward, which lets you concentrate on the wrestling.

You're still playing through a year of TV shows, only this time each show contains only three matches. So there are less meaningless fights to skip through, and more action involving you. And the whole 'walking around' backstage sections of the last couple of PS2 *SmackDown!*s has also been hoofed out. Now, during a Season, you have a text list of five places you can visit between matches under the Move heading. If there's no-one in the car park, it tells you there's no-one in the damn car park, so there's no more



ALL OVER Steph shows off the moves she learned from HHH.

HOW UP TO DATE IS *HERE COMES THE PAIN?*

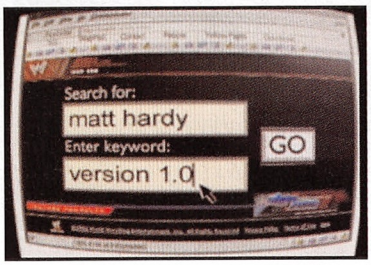
IT'S THE QUESTION THAT DOGS GAMES BASED ON REALITY. HOW NEW IS THE PAIN?



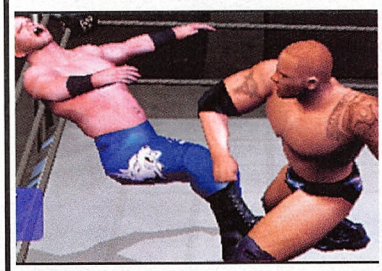
KANE UNMASKED Well, that's VERY good. This only happened, what, two months ago? Three months at the absolute tops, and the exposed face of Kane is in here. Good work
UP-TO-DATE RATING: 5/5



STEPH'S SIZE Is it just us, or does the General Manager gain a few pounds every week? *Here Comes the Pain* is nice to Steph, portraying a skinnier style from a good six months ago.
UP-TO-DATE RATING: 2/5



MATTITUDE Matt Hardy Version 1.0 is in, along with his glitchy web-style intro video. And his brother Jeff has been removed, as in the real world. Matt would approve.
UP-TO-DATE RATING: 4/5



ROCK'S HAIR AND TATTOOS Now Rocky's gone all Hollywood and big time it's hard keeping up with his changing appearances. The newer 'Evil Rock' is here, short hair and tatts correct.
UP-TO-DATE RATING: 5/5

IN SUMMARY... If we assume the developer is being generous in pretending not to notice Steph's weight gain, then we can find no fault with the game's relevance. There's no Zach Gowen, but that's forgivable – programming a one-legged wrestler would take ages.



WHO'S THE BOSS? Vince is the boss. So be good and lose to him.



FACE BREAK KID Shawn's special move. A big kick. He's hard.



V. NICE Check out how good this game looks. It's awesome.

walking around empty car parks hoping to bump into someone for a bit of unnecessary backstage story action. It's a huge improvement, one that focuses *SmackDown!* on what it's all about – the sheer thrill of the wrestling.

You might, for example, see that Stephanie, lovely, curvy, out-sized sex bomb Stephanie, is in her General Manager's office. So pop in and ask for a title fight during week one of your very first Season in the WWE. We did that. And amazingly, Steph said yes, it's perfectly OK for us to challenge for the title in what was only our second-ever match. So out we went. Three minutes later we were crying on the floor in a pool of blood and perhaps a small amount of wee, as the true difficulty of some of *Here Comes the Pain*'s Season matches was revealed.

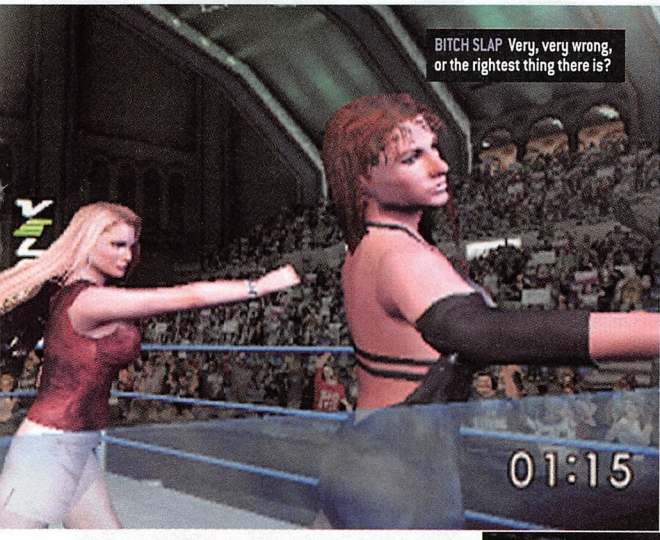
You need to start off small in Season mode. It's very hard, the fights extremely long and gruelling, with early matches earning you just over $1,000 for a win – chicken feed when you need $10,000 to buy an alternate colour bikini for Torrie Wilson. There's a whole year to get through, 52 weeks of text-only introductions by JR and The King, backstage story highlights and branching alliance possibilities.

It's good. A bit simple, but for playing on your own it's a decent enough way to keep you ploughing through it and motivated to unlock

"THIS FRESH NEW *SMACKDOWN!* PLAYS MUCH BETTER THAN ANY WRESTLING GAME HAS BEFORE."

the extra stuff. Which, happily, is all listed for you. As ever, new wrestlers and arenas appear for selection in the one-off Exhibition matches once you've met them in the Season, so, for once, there's a genuine need to complete the whole story section if you want to see all that *Here Comes the Pain* contains.

The money you win while Season-ing buys you yet more new stuff. New costumes, a choice of seven all-new move sets to use and allocate to the creatures you've formed in the Create a Wrestler feature, new arenas to fight in and even saucy pictures of the Divas (that's the female wrestlers to you, dad) to replace those of Triple H on the game's loading screens. In all, the Season mode is simpler and easier to cane than last year's, but with the needless walking around eradicated it's also a lot more immediate and, yes, fun. Sacrifice a child to the God of Games in thanks. The story is also amusing, concerning – at first – Big Show's autobiography. Then it moves on to encompass such joys as unexpected Birthday parties and slapping the

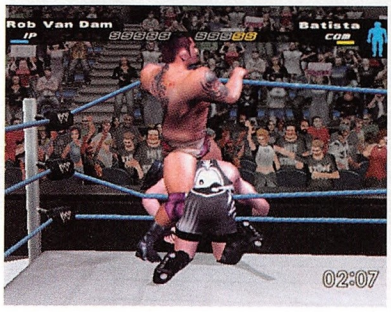










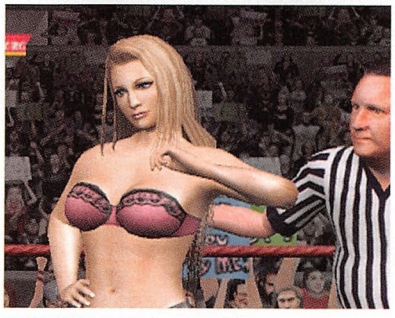


Undertaker in the face (you win an extra wrestling point for being brave if you slap him twice). We like the story. There are still plenty of moments where your actions clearly have no effect on the plot at all, with your choices receiving generic replies like "Yes. I thought you'd say that.", but overall the *Pain*'s Season story is definitely an improvement over those we've seen before in *WWE* games.

EASIER DOES IT

This fresh new *SmackDown!* plays much better than any wrestling game has before. It's so very easy to pick up, play, pull off staggering moves and feel like your some kind of super games player from planet Games. You can hammer away at X and do pretty well, or go the grappling route by using circle and the direction pad to launch your grapples. So go in, press circle to grab your opponent, then press it again to throw. The two top triggers are your counter buttons – one to counter blows another for evading holds – with a press of them both at the right time stepping your fighter away from enemy *SmackDown!* specials. It's all so very easy, but like, er, draughts or chess or something, gives you huge scope for tactical play.

The L2 and R2 triggers are crucial to winning those harder title matches. L2 dodges blows, making your wrestler block, duck or step away from a punch and set up a reply of his or her own. R2 does the same for throws, squirming your man's way out of holds and appearing behind your opponent to throw it back at them. Unlike most fighting games where countering has to be performed so fast it often comes down to sheer luck, *SmackDown!*, with its longer, slower grapples, gives you enough time to actually see what's happening and hit the right shoulder to escape. Cue some superb two-player snaking about, as you counter, your mate counters your counter, then you counter-counter his counter to counter back before he's countered you. For a game so seemingly simple, there's huge potential



TOPLESS MODEL This is the sort of sick filth you can expect.



OLD-DUST This fat man also needs a bra. Don't want to see it.



BOOK END It's perfectly OK between consenting adults.

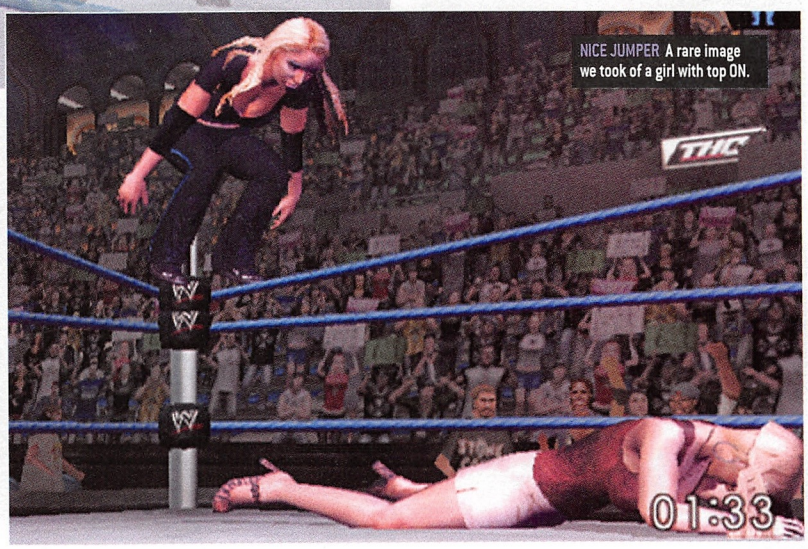


DO IT! Girls, forcing other girls to do stuff. How we love this.









NICE JUMPER A rare image we took of a girl with top ON.

for out-thinking your enemy.

The match types are also properly different this time, and are aided immensely by PS2-controlled opponents with actual brains. The enemy men of *SmackDown!*s old have all been pretty stupid, blundering about, not having much of a clue, not really doing what they're supposed to. In *Here Comes the Pain*, your foes have moved significantly up the evolutionary ladder. They know how to use chairs. They didn't before. We wrestled Tajiri, who we observed grabbing a chair from beneath the stage and climbing into the ring with it. But he didn't hit us with it – he put it on the floor, grabbed us, and DDT-ed our wrestler's face right into the "steel" chair for maximum damage. Clever boy.

Play as Rey Mysterio, for example, and your dazed enemy will predictably – but just like in real life – fall onto the ropes well away from the ring posts, which is suspiciously convenient seeing as Rey's special move requires his opponent to be in that exact position. That's good. That's your pay off, and when the new 3D, blurry, multi-angled *SmackDown!* special kicks in, it feels all the more satisfying. You've just done that thing off the telly. You are a wrestler. Congratulations. It's not just *SmackDown!* moves that warrant flash camera shots – climb the ropes and your jump attack is often enhanced by a bit of wonky-angled, blurry camera action. It's glam, it's impressive and it looks better than any other wrestling game – even *Raw 2* on Xbox, which, you may be pleased to know, is rubbish.

"YOUR FOES HAVE MOVED SIGNIFICANTLY UP THE EVOLUTIONARY LADDER. THEY KNOW HOW TO USE CHAIRS. THEY DIDN'T BEFORE."

NAKEDER THAN EVER

Our favourite by far – and it will be your favourite too – of the new match types, and we've been saving this one for the middle of the review where most people lose interest, is, with thanks once again to the God of Games, the Bra & Panties match. Without wanting to sound too much like SICK PERVERTS who only think about one thing and who are a danger to all women, this is a fantastic addition to *SmackDown!* we like a lot. Not just because it has girls getting their tops torn off (although that is about 95% of why) but also because it introduces new elements to the previously stale *WWE* playing style. It may well involve the morally dubious act of pretty much sexually assaulting women by ripping their clothes off, but the Bra & Panties matches enliven SmackDown! by a mile.

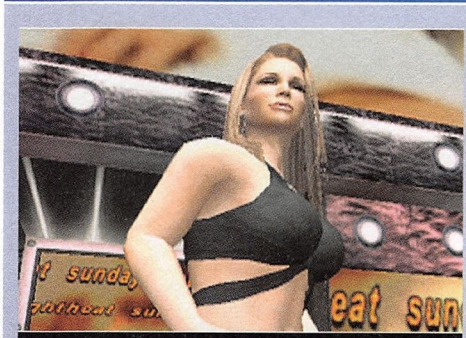
So there's you, right, beating up Torrie Wilson. She's weakened, lying on the floor, probably crying a bit and wondering what she did that was so wrong. Then, so the game tells you, "pressing Down and circle will attempt to rip off the Diva's clothes". So you yank her top off, pressing buttons quickly in an old-school style to bring the fabric-ripping metre down to the tear level. And off it comes. Is this wrong? The game only lets you play girl-on-girl matches in this borderline rape mode, so there's no worrying sight of seeing a huge man tearing a lady's trousers off. But even so, we momentarily paused to reflect on whether this is really the sort of thing the kids of today should be exposed to in video games. Then we see Torrie's lovely pink bra and decide that as long as we get to see bras and have fun we don't really care about anyone else.

So then you do it all again, repeating the beating, and hammering the button to roll your opponent over and pull off her shorts. It's quite obscene and borderline sexist. But only borderline. No girls are ever going to see it to complain, are they? So off the defeated and semi-naked lady runs, covering her body as she goes. Sadly her hair and arms pass through her shoulders, stomach and torso a bit as she moves them toward her body, but hey, you still

BEHOLD! THE BRA AND PANTIES MATCH!

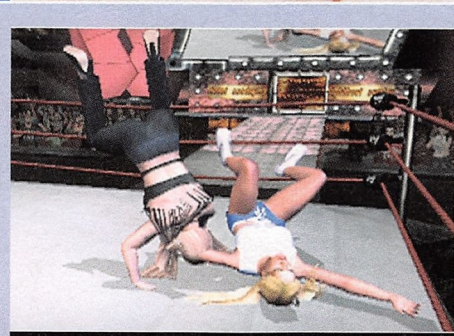
IT'S THE BEST THING IN ANY GAME, EVER, BY APPROXIMATELY FIVE HUNDRED MILLION MILES. HERE'S HOW THE BRA AND PANTIES MATCHES WORK. MMM, BRAS. MMM, PANTIES. MMM, BRAS AND PANTIES.





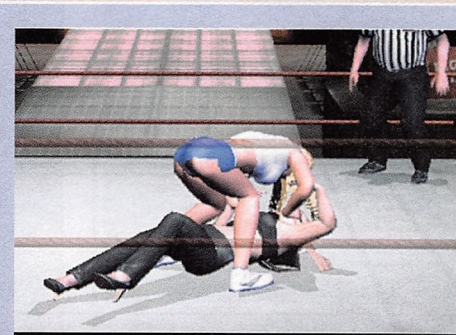
#01 HELLO LADY!

Well hello, sweetie. Welcome to Hell. If you don't mind us saying so, that top of yours looks a little bit flimsy to be fighting in. Let's hope nothing bad happens to it. Let's hope it doesn't GET TORN COMPLETELY OFF.



#02 SOFTEN HER UP

Right. Basic woman advice, thanks to the politically incorrect WWE agony uncle. If you want her to take her top off for you, you've got to slap her around a bit first. When she's weak you can rip her gear off easier.



#03 PRESS TO SAVE DIGNITY

When someone's got your top and is trying to tear it off, a mini gauge pops up where your energy bar is. Press buttons quickly to keep the bar down in the Escape zone to stay clothed and keep the bra covered.



#04 OFF COMES THE TOP!

But get the gauge to Strip and your wrestling honey whips off the lass' top and waves it to the crowd. See the humiliation. And, more importantly, see the BRA. That's an ACTUAL BRA, like the ones women wear.



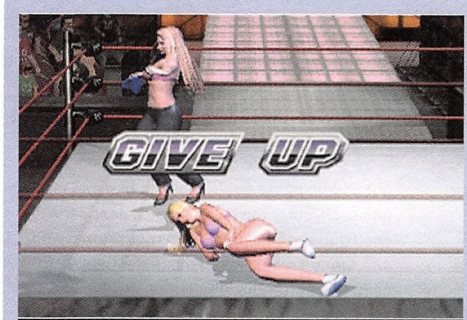
#05 NOW EVERYONE'S LOSING THEIR TOPS

So we got complacent. Maybe we got all excited at seeing a bra. Whatever, it somehow went wrong, and now Torrie's stripping our Sable down. See the give in that fabric. And also see a small amount of BRA.



#06 NOW GET THE PANTS!

Our de-topped Sable wants revenge in the form of pulling Torrie's shorts off to reveal her panties. Pressing down and circle makes your woman position herself over her enemy, lift her legs up and start tugging at her trews.



#07 PANTIES EXPOSED!

Wave the shorts, triumphantly, to the crowd, before taking them home and putting them on eBay, describing them a "pre-worn by a WWE Diva". Should go for at least $400. Look at that. A nearly naked woman.



#08 YES, YOU CAN RUN

The defeated top and bottomless loser scampers from the ring, protecting her modesty with her hands. If you're not feeling slightly dirty at this point you are an EVIL PERSON who's going to HELL. The poor girl.



#09 CELEBRATE!

Celebrate – in your bra. That's a woman. In her bra. Result. That's a WOMAN'S BRA. See that? That's a BRA. Now you can say you've seen one, just don't mention it was only in a games magazine.

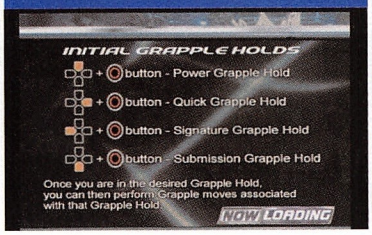
WHY THIS YEAR'S *SMACKDOWN!* IS BETTER THAN LAST YEAR'S...

HERE COMES THE PAIN DESTROYS ALL PREVIOUS WRESTLING GAMES. HERE'S WHY, IN A SORT OF LIST THING.



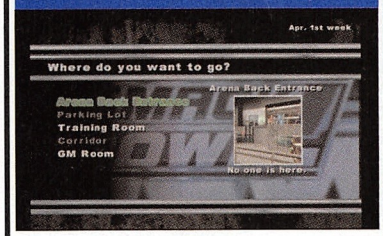
> SIMPLER SEASON MODE

Three matches on one screen, no messing. Here are your options, that one starts the match. It's that easy. It's a breath of fresh air.



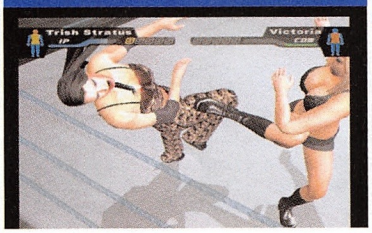
> SIMPLER CONTROLS

It's much easier – and faster – to play. Some won't like the simplification, but we do. We love it. And it's our magazine. So it's good.



> LESS WANDERING ABOUT

See that list? That replaces the entire 3D wandering about bit of the last *SmackDown!*. It's way better. You know where to go. Result.



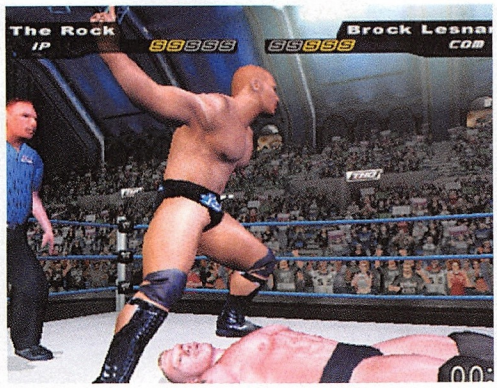
> SEXIER LADIES

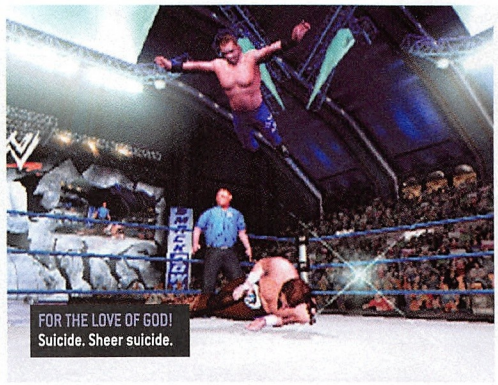
Christ, check out Trish. That's pretty much all of her chest you can see there. Email us if you want this screenshot in a bigger size.



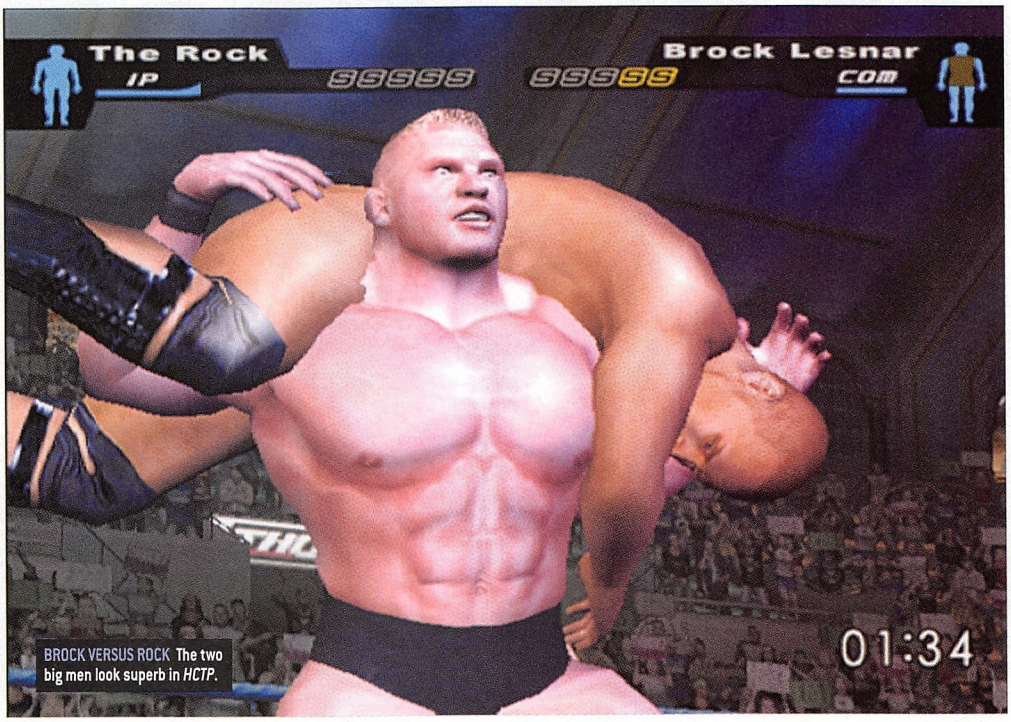
> MORE INTELLIGENT OPPONENTS

Enemies attack more, allies help more, the ref slaps you back if you accidentally DDT him onto a table. It's more alive, more fun.





FOR THE LOVE OF GOD! Suicide. Sheer suicide.



BROCK VERSUS ROCK The two big men look superb in *HCTP*.

"HER HAIR AND ARMS PASS THROUGH HER SHOULDERS, STOMACH AND TORSO A BIT AS SHE MOVES THEM TOWARD HER BODY."

get to see a bra. And that doesn't happen often.

The hair-through-shoulders thing is pretty bad though. The character likenesses are spot on and up to date – the inclusion of Eddie Guerrero's recent Cheat 2 Win angle illustrates the rough time cut-off point, and Kane had been de-masked – but the look is spoiled a little by a few minor stuff-going-through-stuff-it-shouldn't problems. How hard can it be to program hair to NOT go through shoulders? Surely it's one line of programming code, like, IF SHOULDERS = YES THEN MAKE HAIR = YES +1. Programmers, please, for next year can you please stop the girls' hair going into their bodies? Sable's sexy little lap dance taunt isn't quite as arousing when her hair's going in the back of her neck and sticking out the front of her chest.

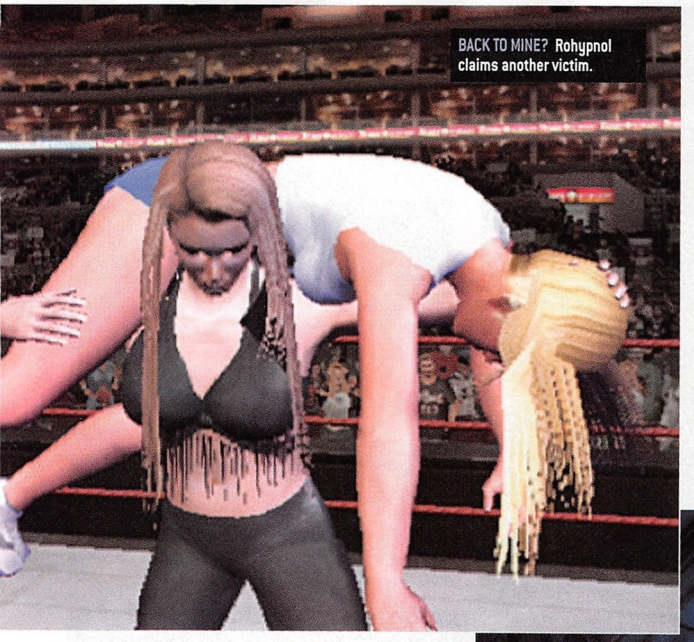
But, we suppose, it's OK really. The poor PS2 is doing more than ever before, with the blood, ripping fabric, superbly detailed wrestler models and – really this time – a 3D crowd. Every year we get promised a 3D crowd, every year they get nearer to pulling it off, but always fail. Last year the front row was 3D. This year, the whole front standing area on the floor of the stadium is – a big improvement. Custom banners for each fighter are in too, with slogans familiar and now aimed at supporting or dissin' the guys in the ring. There's no speech, certainly not the wrestler voices we were promised (or at least thought we were – did we imagine that?) but visually, at least, the atmosphere is spot on.

Crowd cheering is great and, this may be a stupid mistake or the greatest joke yet seen in a video game, but the crowd chanting A-Train's "Shave your back!" taunt when Trish got her top ripped off certainly had us laughing. If they meant to do that, it's genius.

TEAM EFFORT

Tag matches are more fun than before too. The right stick is used to call in your out-of-ring partner, who fires off a few hits before the ref pulls him off and sends him out. In fact, the ref is a big star in *Here Comes the Pain*. Knock him out and he misses your pins, hit him and he'll hit you back, enter the ring with a chair and the do-gooder in the blue shirt will wrestle it from you and throw it away. Everyone under the PS2's control is better this time. Not just a bit, but significantly more intelligent, making neo-*SmackDown!* really come alive.

Play a bout with a manager and they help you too, rather than bumbling about randomly and getting stuck in a loop walking on the spot facing a wall like before. You want to manoeuvre your enemy into your corner, so your manager can slap them around a bit to soften them up.



BACK TO MINE? Rohypnol claims another victim.



WEDGIE! Girls. Literally tearing their clothes off. Christ.





CROSSFACE! Wrestler moves and attacks are all in here.

Get yourself stuck in the other corner and the opposing manager tries to trip you up, and often twangs your head down on the ropes if you get too near. It's about a million times better than the idiot automatons that featured in last year's *SmackDown! game*.

And there's the blood. Frankly, it's a little disappointing, but still nice to see. First Blood matches demand you make your opponent bleed to win. So you do. Cue a big red flash and a close-up shot of the bleeding man who's lost, sobbing and broken on the floor. So there's the blood. Red stuff appears in regular matches too, but it's polite – a raspberry jam smear on the face, nothing too offensive.

It all looks great, despite the old problem of stuff going through stuff it shouldn't, as mentioned; arms going through chests, ropes scything through necks, etc. But, and here comes the conclusion you demand, *Here Comes the Pain* plays better than any other wrestling game, has the all crazy bra/panties action, leaks blood and contains everything that makes the *WWE* great – right down to the camp "Ooh!" the crowd shouts out when you slap someone really hard on the chest.

WWE SmackDown! Here Comes the Pain is the best wrestling game yet created, and, for the first time, a really enjoyable fighting game in its own right. You don't need to know anything about wrestling to love this, but if you do, you'll love it more than anything.

/ GARY CUTLACK



UPLIFTING That's the best bra we've ever seen in a game.

PSW VERDICT

> UPPERS	> DOWNERS
> Great-looking wrestlers	> Usual collision problems
> Super-fast play	> No Zach Gowen!
> Much better Season game	> Still no wrestler voices
> Bras. And. Panties.	> Blood could be better

GRAPHICS	> Glorious, but stuff *still* goes through stuff	9
SOUNDS	> Not much talking, but great crowd chants	8
GAMEPLAY	> The Season *is* good, multiplayer's cool	8

OVERALL SCORE 9

A great game, and not just if you know who Ric Flair is. Quick, punchy, funny and very violent, there's nothing not to love here. The best *SmackDown!* ever.



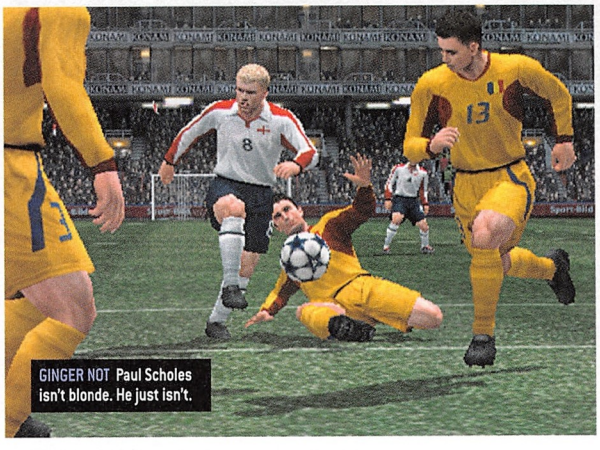
BROUGHT TO BOOK The referees are slightly less card-happy.







BUFFON THE BUFFOON Your keeper is more likely to drop serious clangers this time.



GINGER NOT Paul Scholes isn't blonde. He just isn't.

SEE IT ON THE DVD

PRO EVOLUTION SOCCER 3

THE LONG-AWAITED THIRD INSTALMENT OF THE GREATEST FOOTBALL SERIES OF ALL TIME FINALLY KICKS OFF. BUT IS IT A BEAUTIFUL GAME OR AN UNSIGHTLY MESS?

> TYPE	FOOTBALL
> PLAYERS	1-8
> OUT	NOW
> PUBLISHER	KONAMI
> PRICE	$99.95
> DEVELOPER	KONAMI
> ONLINE	NO

PSW GAME OF THE MONTH

DIARY OF A PES3 REVIEWER: ZERO HOURS, one minute: Let's be straight on this from the outset. *Pro Evolution Soccer 3* was never going to be the "mammoth leap forward for the series" that the developers once promised. But that's only because the previous game came so close to banging its head on the ceiling of PlayStation2 that the scope for such a large-scale overhaul just wasn't there. In short, it couldn't really get *that* much better. So don't go expecting a tidal wave of innovations, for thou shall look mightily silly in your swimming trunks and goggles when the eventual trickle of new moves and options comes lapping around your ankles. Just bring wellies. Much like Ryan Giggs, a player who's been at the very top of his game for nigh on a decade now, the improvements that have been made over last two years aren't immediately apparent. Watch it for long enough, however, and you'll eventually see that *PES3* is now the complete player.

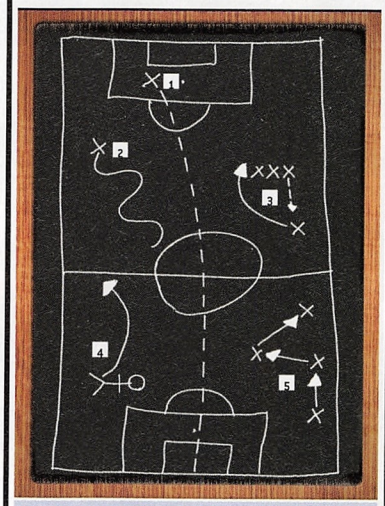
Zero hours, 32 minutes: Why is Paul Scholes blonde? Could this be an act of charity towards the wee ginger bollock on Konami's behalf? Or is it a portent of more serious inaccuracies to come? Let's hope not. **One hour, 41 minutes:** Notice that the players interact with each other with more realism than before. Collisions are felt, mis-timed tackles prompt guilt-winces, tumbles look real and painful. In short, the teams actually look as though they're on the same pitch.

Two hours, 15 minutes: Set up the perfect formation for an England team and save it. **Two hours, 26 minutes:** Attempt to load the saved formation. Fail. **Two hours, 39 minutes:** Attempt again to load the saved formation. Fail again, and then succeed, but only after a serious consultation with the instruction manual. Arrive at the realisation that *PES3*, much like its forefathers, is an *idiot savant*, a fancy way of saying that it can do complicated stuff really easily, but finds simple things extremely difficult. Ever seen the movie *Rain Man*? Dustin Hoffman's character can give you pi to 100 decimal points from memory, but doesn't know how to tie his shoelaces. *PES3* is much the same. It can replicate the physics of two footballers clashing like conkers in midair with astonishing realism, yet can't find an easy way to allow you to store formations for future use. The Master League is another example: conducting your transfers in that is a painfully tricky business. Sadly that's all part of the deal. This, it seems, is the price you pay when you work with a genius.

Four hours, 50 minutes: Notice a banner in the crowd reading, "'Ave it." Think to self, "How scabby." **Four hours, 59 minutes:** Having been dumped out of the World Cup at the semi-final stage on penalties, decide to pay a visit to the training ground. Those who follow should prepare for a thorough re-education. Lesson One: dribbling. Where *PES2* had one dribble speed – either you ran fast or you didn't – *PES3* has three. In addition to flat-out sprinting (by holding R1, as

THE GAME PLAN

PRO EVOLUTION 3'S NEW FEATURES IN FULL. WELL, FIVE OF THE BEST ANYWAY....



1. GOALKEEPERS > One-nil down with 30 seconds to go? Win yourself a corner and your goalkeeper will automatically sprint the length of the field in an effort to try and bag you an equaliser. Sweet when it works. Really quite shit when it doesn't.

2. DRIBBLING > As well as being able to pop the old 360° spin (see panel on following page for more on that), you also have more control over shimmies and step-overs. We hear rumours of a nutmeg, but have yet to see it.

3. SET PIECES > Scoring directly from free kicks is considerably easier now you can add more dip and bend. *PES2* players might struggle to adapt for a while, but the principles remain the same.

4. PLAY ON > See that stick man? He's been fouled midway, releasing a Hollywood through-ball (thanks Big Ron) to a teammate. Thankfully the referee has the good sense to allow you to play on.

5. FIXED PLAYER CONTROL > Harking back to *Libero Grande*, *PES3* offers you the chance to control a single footballer. Ashley Cole actually in position? Thanks to the radar and your dexterity, you'd better believe it.



VOLLEY BALL Hit it first time to catch the keeper unawares.



CARLOS THE TACKLER He's never been the best defender in the world.





before), you are now able to jog at slightly lower speed, affording you greater control of the ball. Find yourself in a seriously tight spot and you can also waddle along in a slow dribble. What's the point in the slow dribble? (Shrugs). More new stuff: the number of feints and step-overs has been increased, players can jump tackles, the crossing has been improved, scoring directly from freekicks is plenty easier (you have the option of either firing in a hard and straight shot or curling in a soft and bendy one) and you can change controllers mid-match (about time too).

THE PASS MASTERS

Far more significant than any of this is the fact that *PES3* players are more comfortable passing first time. Sounds like a relatively minor thing but, truly, it isn't. What it means is that it's now possible to move the ball around more quickly to link together solid chains of one-touch passes that can tie up defenders and leave them breathless and confused.

> "SOLID CHAINS OF ONE-TOUCH PASSES CAN TIE UP DEFENDERS AND LEAVE THEM BREATHLESS AND CONFUSED."

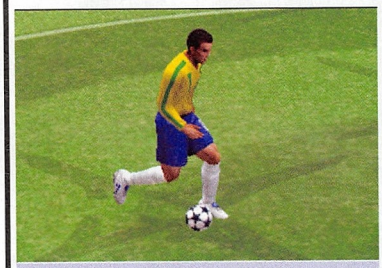
Five hours, four minutes: Beat Poland 3-0. Notice that we're getting pretty good at *PES3*. And that's because instead of attempting to play the ball through crowded midfields as we would've done last time around, we're instead launching long passes, running at defenders and, significantly, shooting on the volley. Whereas in *PES2* players needed to control the ball before having a dig, they can now strike a moving ball accurately and with power. The fact that attackers are more instinctive, more likely to react automatically when the ball falls to them, also helps. Therein lies the key to succeeding in *PES3*: always make sure that you have midfield players running in on the follow-up whenever anyone shoots.

Five hours, 41 minutes: Three up against Finland, decide to break out the cigars and begin showboating. Notice that it's easier to do this than it was in the previous game. As Emile Heskey lashes in a fourth, conclude that the biggest difference between *PES2* and *PES3* is that this time around you feel far more in control of your players. **Five hours, 45 minutes:** Wait a second. Did Emile Heskey really just lash in a fourth? Why on earth have they made him so good this time around? (Shrugs).

Six hours, 43 minutes: Enter the *PES* Shop for the first time. With 500 points in the bank (points are handed out for winning matches in any of the modes) we have the option of either buying a handful of new players – Paul Ince for 150 points? No thank you – or an equally pointless ball effect that apparently changes the look of the replays. Save another 500 and we can

SPIN DOCTOR

A FRAME-BY-FRAME LOOK AT *PRO EVOLUTION 3*'S MOST IMPRESSIVE NEW TRICK....



STEP ONE > Find a suitably skilful player – a Brazilian should do it – and jog gracefully into an open expanse of field.



STEP TWO > Rotate the right analogue stick through 360 degrees in a brisk manner. Prepare to look cool.



STEP THREE > Look on with glee as your Brazilian reaches the halfway point in his journey around the ball.



STEP FOUR > Almost done. Just another 90 degrees to go. Why are you doing this again? Oh yeah, because you want to look good.



STEP FIVE > To complete the trick, simply gather the ball and sprint into space while trying not to fall over. Nice work.



REPLAY THE FIELD Anytime you fancy a replay, just do it. We've waited a long time for this.



SPOT THE BALL Penalties still have a slightly random element.



GOLDEN EMILE Just get the ball to Heskey. He's great.

unlock double-speed matches. Hmm.

Eight hours, 15 minutes: Crawl back into the *PES* Shop with 1,000 points burning holes in our pockets, glowing welts of dead skin on our thumbs. Unlock the double-speed matches, try it for 30 seconds, then give up. Too bloody fast. What did we expect? (Shrugs).

Eight hours, 17 minutes: Decide to start a Master League. **Nine hours, 40 minutes:** Come to the conclusion that there are few things in all of life more satisfying than building up a team in *PES3*'s Master League. With only unsophisticated Sunday league hoofers at your disposal, the kind who spend half-time on the crapper, smoking pipes while reading *Fisherman's World*, you're forced to go against everything you believe in in search of those much-needed points. Which means playing the long ball and kicking lumps out of players far more skilful than your own. Sounds boring, but it isn't. There's a lot to be said for playing cynical, negative, uncreative football. For one, it makes you feel more like a real manager, giving you an insight into how it must be for lower-division bosses who have to mend and make do with featherweight defenders, shitty midfielders and skin-and-bone attackers. And for two, it makes you appreciate the true value of a goal. In *FIFA*, hyperinflation means that goals are worth less than a gypsy's trainers. As you score the tenth 30-yard screamer in that half, you emit an almost inaudible sigh of indifference. In *PES3*, as you scramble home a truly crappy goal in the ninetieth minute to round off yet another wonderfully undeserved victory, you bellow with a bestial ferocity that causes neighbours to look up from newspapers.

Nine hours, 58 minutes: Cave in and finally concede that Konami has at long last made a decent fist of the commentary. The real difference is that now Trevor Brooking and Peter Brackley refer back to key incidents throughout the match, perhaps reflecting some 50 minutes later on a controversial equaliser that changed the complexion of the game early on. It's a minor thing, but it certainly adds to the drama of the individual matches. Granted it's not perfect; at times the pair can be more fickle than Manchester United supporters – one minute you're playing wonderful attacking football, the next you're lucky to still be in the game – but only a fool would deny that the developer has



TURKEY SHOOT **Ortega slides one past Rustu. The faces are incredibly lifelike.**



DO RON RON RON **Ronaldo mops up from close range.**



CROWD CONTROL **Play badly and the fans won't come.**



FRENCH CLASS **As before, Zidane is the most influential player in the game.**



BACK-STICK MEN **Defenders cover the posts on corners.**

"THE DONKEYS AT YOUR DISPOSAL ARE THE KIND WHO SPEND HALF-TIME ON THE CRAPPER READING *FISHERMAN'S WORLD*."

finally got the two commentators marching in the right direction.

Ten hours, 23 minutes: Realise that for the first time in the history of *Pro Evolution*, the atmosphere of domestic football has been perfectly captured. Epiphany comes during game between Tottenham Hotspur and Fulham played on a muddy pitch in pissing rain to a low four-figure crowd. The big matches – World Cup finals and the like – are still just as heated and as atmospheric as ever. It's just that now the game can replicate the look and feel of everything from a meaningless league match to a major international showpiece.

12 hours, 10 minutes: Call a brief halt to the Master League in order to bathe and reflect. While lying in the bath surrounded by scented candles and whale sounds, conclude that Konami hasn't quite done all it could to improve *PES3*'s Career mode. Though incredibly rewarding in the long-term, the management side of the Master League is still weak. Signing players is far more of an ordeal than it needs to be and the decision to use points and not dollars (or pounds, or, erm, cases of beer) to calculate the value of a player serves as a constant (and massively unnecessary) reminder that everything you're doing is just make-believe. Hate to say it, but *PES3* could learn plenty from *FIFA 2004* in this regard. The only real improvements here – ie, developing youth players is more hands-on this time around – are largely irrelevant.

15 hours, 34 minutes: Stop playing *PES3* and start thinking about the review. Make note to self to try to build up the tension – will it be a nine out of ten or a ten out of ten?

15 hours, 35 minutes: Realise that you've already seen the score in the bottom right hand corner. A nine it is then. As much as we love it – and truly we do – *PES3* is nonetheless a few yards short of greatness. An Online mode, a fully refurbished Master League, an official licence and an end to all this Hemloz/Henchoz nonsense (sorry to report that many player names are as ridiculous as ever) and *PES3's* final score could've been up into the double figures. As it stand it's still comfortably top of the league in terms of PlayStation2 football titles, but we're nonetheless nagged by the feeling that so much more could've been achieved with just a little more application. That said, your *PSW* homework remains to go out and buy yourself a copy right away. Because we guarantee that you will love *PES3*, it's just that you might have to work a little harder at your relationship with the game that you would've liked.

PSW VERDICT

> UPPERS	> DOWNERS
> Deeper and more rewarding	> Master League not perfect
> Graphics are top drawer	> CPU teams overly defensive
> Master League is better	> Player names still phoney
> Fast and demanding	> Online would've been nice

GRAPHICS	> An outstanding level of detail throughout	9
SOUNDS	> Decent commentary, weak crowd effects	8
GAMEPLAY	> Good as it ever was. And a little bit better	9

OVERALL SCORE 9

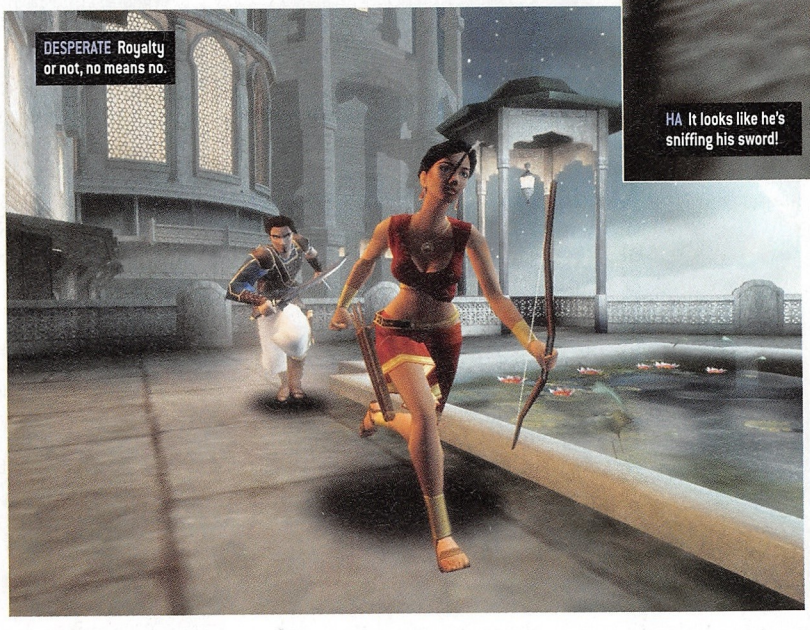
A work of art tarnished by a handful of lazy brushstrokes. Two billion light years ahead of *FIFA 2004*. Still, you never get the feeling that *Pro Evolution Soccer 3* is ever straining itself.



THE CASTLE It's massive. You can even see where you've been hours previously.



HA It looks like he's sniffing his sword!



DESPERATE Royalty or not, no means no.



OBLIGATORY You want stealth? Ah.



PSW MUST BUY

PRINCE OF PERSIA: THE SANDS OF TIME

MY NAME IS PRINCE AND I AM FUNKY...

> TYPE	ACTION
> PLAYERS	1
> OUT	NOVEMBER
> PUBLISHER	UBISOFT
> PRICE	$99.95
> DEVELOPER	UBISOFT

PICTURE THIS - YOU SPY AN ENEMY UP AHEAD, his back to you, oblivious to your presence. You know you can dispatch him quickly without too much risk of any personal injury if you could get close behind him. There's one slight problem - the walkway between you and your destination has collapsed, leaving nothing but a solitary pennant hanging from the wall. Steeling courage you run towards the gap, twisting at the last second to run, not on the floor but across the wall. Half way through his gravity-defying run you fling yourself from the wall and grab onto the pennant, using your momentum to propel yourself over the rest of the gap and onto the guard. A few quick sword blows later and it's all over. Believe it or not, this scene isn't from the newest *Matrix* game. Instead, it's from *Prince of Persia: The Sands of Time*, a game that manages to draw from so many different game styles and ideas but still manages to retain that unique *PoP* feel.



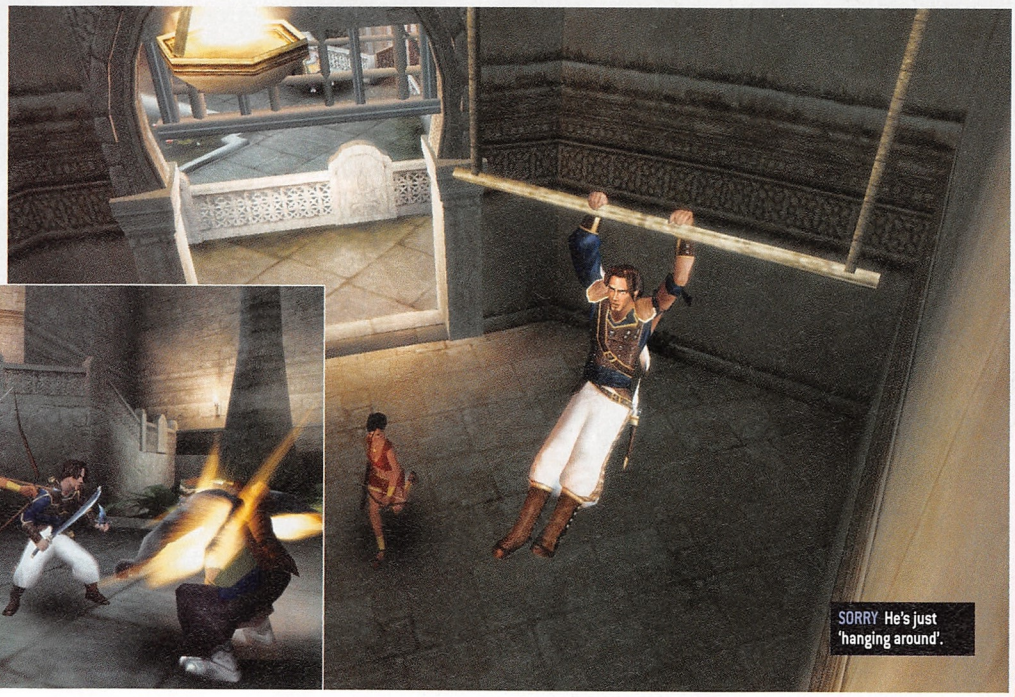
RANGE Time for the sword baby.

The plot is classic Hollywood fare - a heroic prince must save the day after an evil Vizier (is there really any other kind?) dupes him into unleashing the terrifying and destructive *Sands of Time*. Along the way to redemption the young prince must avoid traps, navigate seemingly impossible obstacles, kill hordes of evil creatures (including everyone's favourites, zombies and giant insects) and of course, save and fall for the girl; all in a day's work for the most nimble man in gaming. Although the Prince of Persia franchise has delved into the realms of the third dimension before with the lamentable and oh-so creatively titled *Prince of Persia 3D*, *Sands of Time* has managed to get it right, combining the tense platforming and split second timing of the original game with all of the new tricks available to next generation consoles, ranging from the aforementioned true 3D to some incredible special effects.

When stuck in a two dimensional world, Prince of Persia, although an amazing game in it's own right, had to limit what players could do. Sure they could engage in simple sword fights with enemies and jump from ledge to ledge but that was about it. The move to 3D has given the wily prince a far wider range of abilities. For a start he's no longer bound to simply jumping from ledge to ledge. In an obviously *Matrix* inspired turn, the prince can now run along walls for relatively long distances, enabling him to bridge gaps too wide for standard jumps. He can also launch himself off walls to facilitate wall jumping to reach higher levels, reach poles that can be swung off to gain even more height or grab onto columns that need to be climbed. There are so many moves and combinations of moves in *Sands of Time* that to list them all would take up the entire review - suffice it to say that you'll need all of them if you plan on finishing the game. The move to 3D also puts a whole new spin on combat as well. Instead of the simple advance and retreat dynamics of the original 2D

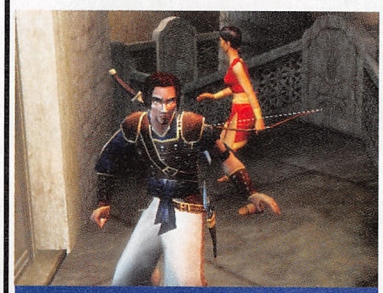






SORRY He's just 'hanging around'.

SAVE ME



Save points are very useful commodities in *Prince of Persia: The Sands of Time*. Not only do they allow you to save your progress so you don't have to do the same level over and over again, they also give you a hint of what you have to do in the next level. When the player steps into a save point they are granted a brief vision of the upcoming level, showing in flashes some of the moves they will have to perform at various different places. Rather than giving anything away, the system works more like a movie trailer, whetting the player's appetite for the next level and prompting them to check it out rather than turn off the console and get a good night's sleep.



game, combat is now a flowing, incredibly dynamic and cinematic beast with the prince being able to dodge in various different ways as well as use the environment and enemies to his advantage. Dodging into a wall allows the player to rebound, inflicting a very damaging attack whereas dodging into an enemy allows the player to acrobatically leap over them, facilitating a disabling strike from behind.

By far the most interesting new mechanic in *Sands of Time* are the sands themself. Once players have found the Dagger of Time the player has the ability to distort time for short periods. Through different button combinations, players can freeze enemies on the spot, go into a bullet time style effect with time slowing down (enabling the player to combat many enemies at once) and even rewind time. The final power is simultaneously the most impressive and most useful as it allows players to rewind mistakes that can lead to death - instead of starting from the last save point if you fall off a cliff you can simply rewind the game until the falling prince is back on the precipice. Not only does it look amazing but it's also an impressive technical achievement considering that the PS2 doesn't have any real storage media other than standard memory cards.

"THERE ARE SO MANY MOVES AND COMBINATIONS OF MOVES IN SANDS OF TIME THAT TO LIST THEM ALL WOULD TAKE UP THE ENTIRE REVIEW"

It's nearly impossible to describe how good all of *Sands of Time's* animations actually are, aside from saying that they are without a doubt the best seen in a game as yet. Every move is perfectly motion captured or animated and you'll probably find yourself simply performing different moves simply to see what they look like. The textures are equally beautiful and include some very impressive water effects. The soundtrack features a great mix of Middle Eastern rhythms and is very evocative of the setting. Finally, the voice acting is top notch if a little difficult to hear, with the prince's asides about the pushy princess being an absolute standout. Want more? Just buy.

/DANIEL WILKS



HM He looks a bit piraty really.

PSW VERDICT

> UPPERS	> DOWNERS
> Smooth animation	> Camera Angles
> Hectic combat	> Some Slowdown
> Atmosphere	> Linear
> Devious Traps	> It's a platformer...

GRAPHICS	> Best. Animations. Ever.	10
SOUNDS	> Close your eyes and you're in ancient Persia	8
GAMEPLAY	> Loads of levels but little replay value	8

OVERALL SCORE 9

After the debacle that was *Prince of Persia 3D* it's good to see the franchise get back on track. Long live the Prince!



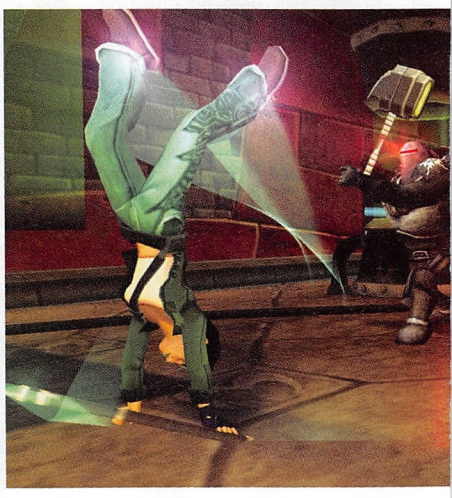
STEALTH Don't let these Alpha Sections spot you.



JOKER WORM Finger puppets gone wrong.







MY HERO I like Jade. I'm not scared to admit it.

PSW MUST BUY

BEYOND GOOD AND EVIL

GOOD? YOU BETCHA. BEYOND GOOD? NO COMMENT. BUT EVIL? HARDLY.

> TYPE	ADVENTURE
> PLAYERS	1
> OUT	NOVEMBER
> PUBLISHER	UBI SOFT
> PRICE	$99.95
> DEVELOPER	UBI SOFT
> ONLINE	NO

EVERY TIME A GAME ARRIVES HERE IN THE OFFICES of *PSW*, our immediate joy is soon overwhelmed by a sense of foreboding. In this increasingly competitive gaming world, publishers realise that good press is a key factor in good sales. They'll go to considerable lengths, then, to convince us of a game's worth. Perks are everywhere, from free lunches to hookers and everything in between, mainly revolving around alcohol. Of course, it's disgusting, and we would never consciously allow this satanic tokenism to actually influence our judgement anyway. Although, no doubt they are hugely successful on a subconscious level – so, PR teams, keep them coming.

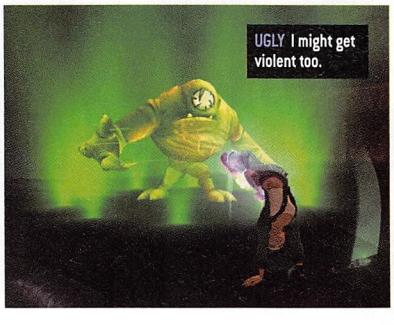
Yet there is one factor that gets us every time: the game itself. See, we love a game that speaks to us, and reviews are, after all, a very personal judgment. *Gothe-Snape Harbour Bridge Soccer 2004*, for example: instant 10. *The Getaway* is another example. Everyone outside London knew it was shit. But these London buffoons were too busy finding their house or stealing a replica of their own Opel Vectra to actually notice that it plays like a dog.

THE GAME, FOOL

Beyond Good and Evil? Oh, yes. See, this game's another one that speaks to us. You play as a journalist, saving the world. Finally, we have a game to share our almighty burden with. It doesn't matter that it's set in a funny cartoony world called Hillys. Or that Jade's a girl. Or that she's a photographic journalist. Or that she's a foster parent in her spare time. Or that she's brave. Or that she has a pig-man uncle. Or that she's hot. Etcetera etcetera.

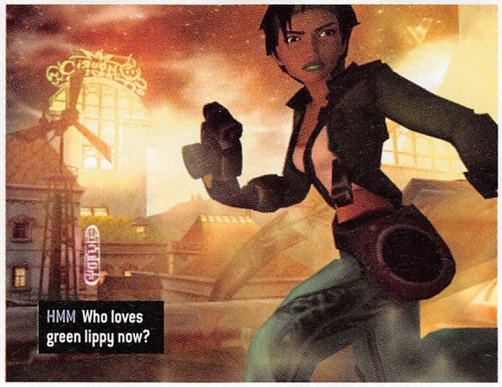
Fear not, however, as the game's story will captivate anyone. It manages to strike a chord between pop-political conspiracy and childlike charm. Looking at the screen shots, you might be overcome by indifference, spying another kiddy adventure game. Heck, I know I'd be. While initially things might appear a little cutesy wootsy woo, when aliens begin raiding, anti-establishment bodies start popping up, and the masks come off the Alpha Sections, you'll know that things aren't as they may have once appeared. Thankfully, the tone of the game, part humour, part wonder, part intrigue is replicated







ACTION! See, it's not all pansy shit.



HMM Who loves green lippy now?



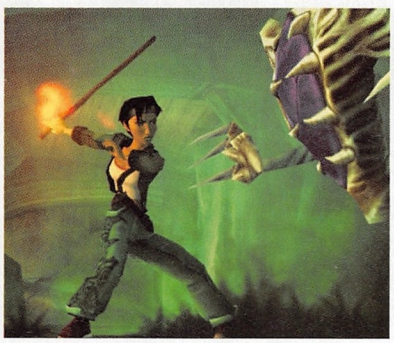
SHE'S HOT, HE'S NOT What? So your girlfriend has crap friends?



ARGH A ghost tit has possessed the rose!



DOUBLE H What a goofball! Just look at him. Ha!



AHEM Yeah, no mystery here. Kill, kill, kill!

superbly throughout the game through modest, appropriate visuals. Michel Ancel (creator of Rayman) and his team have invested considerable subtlety into the game's presentation, through its colourful, vibrant graphics and accomplished voices, sounds and music. It's beautiful (have you seen the water?), but also very consistent. The *Prince of Persia* engine is used well, although the busy harbour vistas are by far the highlight. And sure, war, a pig man, aliens and conspiracies are hardly new themes in storytelling, but Ubisoft Montpellier has handled these themes with just enough humour and compassion to satisfy. You may even shed a tear when Pey'j the pig gets captured. And laugh when an amnesia-riddled companion insists on making a dick of himself.

BUT WHAT ABOUT THE GAME...

So anyway, it's an adventure game, with a few twists. Namely, a hovercraft, a camera and a mate. The predominantly water-filled Hillyan landscape can be traversed by your trusty chosen mode of transport. Upgrades allow you to access previously inaccessible regions, and exploration is encouraged by pearl rewards in side-challenges, such as hovercraft races, bandits' caves and mini-puzzles around town. Your camera gets upgraded over time, and ends up being integral in solving many puzzles, as well as influencing certain mission objectives (you're a photo journalist, after all). Another source of income is compiling a photo catalogue of Hillys' wildlife for the science center – it's *Pokemon Snap* all over again. Finally, many of the game's core missions are carried out by Jade and a companion. What this entails is plenty of cooperation in flicking switches and in the game's satisfying if basic combat, but more importantly some generally good company. Just between you, our entire circulation, and me, I laughed out loud on more than one occasion, as Double H, a fellow rebel, insisted with his Hugh Grant meets Sly Stallone tomfoolery.

"IT MANAGES TO BRIDGE THE CHASM BETWEEN ADULT AND CHILD IN ALL OF US. BEYOND GOOD AND EVIL IS ZELDA FOR THE PLAYSTATION 2"

While it's not a particularly long game, *Beyond Good and Evil* succeeds in offering an extremely well-designed, coherent experience. There ain't no quantity over quality here. The story missions are consistently well constructed, and challenge the mind and memory in their architectural design. Each set-piece is novel, together creating a complete, enchanting world. While we might have wished for a more detailed city area, the game is efficient in its use of NPCs and mini-quests. And while sometimes you'll feel the game clutches your hand a little too firmly, intimating the source of progress too often, the possibility for exploration, particularly as you revisit areas with new hovercraft or camera abilities, impounds the game's direction firmly within the player.

We might have preferred a little more grey in the conspiracy theme, but thankfully the game slowly unfolds a number of mysteries. The answers to the questions of passed parents, of pigs, and of political leaders are the very personal motives that drive the game. Liberating your world? Oh yeah.

This is an extremely polished, intriguing title, that is both paced well and diverse. With a competent combat system, an involving, changing game world and a compelling story, it's full of all the good gaming clichés. But we like it most of all because it manages to bridge the chasm between adult and child in all of us. *Beyond Good and Evil* is *Zelda* for the PlayStation 2.

/JACKSON GOTHE SNAPE

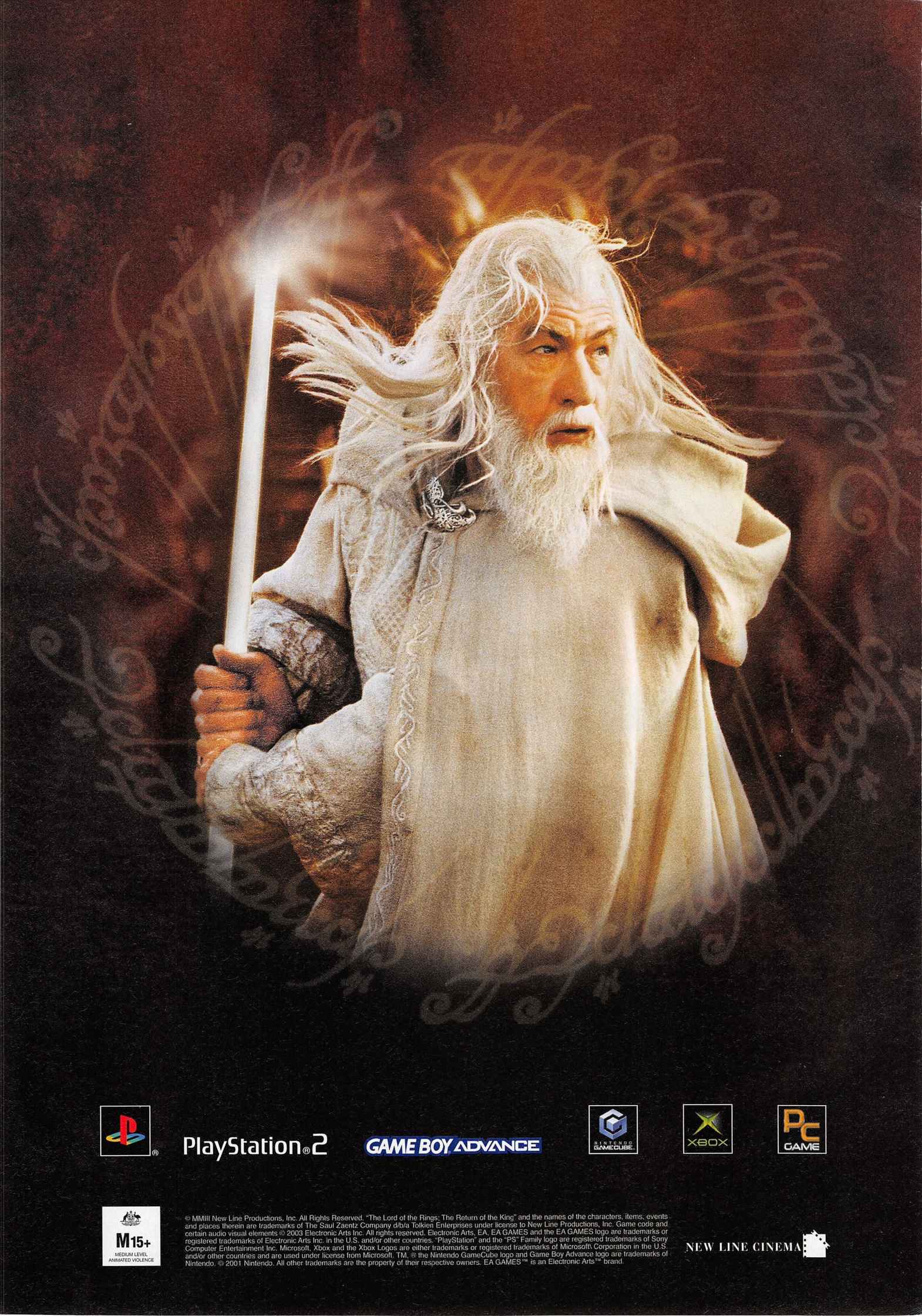
PSW VERDICT

> UPPERS	> DOWNERS
> Delightful environment	> Fairly predictable
> Taking pictures	> It's French
> It made me laugh	> Not enough voices
> Pig man	> Pig man

GRAPHICS	> Beauty in spades.	8
SOUNDS	> Great ambient effects and fair voices.	8
GAMEPLAY	> Simplistic at times, but always compelling.	9

OVERALL SCORE 9

I tells ya, this is enchanting shit right here. A unique adventure game, and one that even the non-believers of the genre should consider.



PlayStation®2

GAME BOY ADVANCE

NINTENDO GAMECUBE

XBOX

PC GAME

M15+
MEDIUM LEVEL
ANIMATED VIOLENCE

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TOOLED UP When ammo is gone, pull out the wrench.







IT'S A START Thankfully *Locked and Loaded* isn't mean with the restart points.



TROUBLE AND STRAFE *PSW* tip: strafe left to right while constantly shooting.

RATCHET AND CLANK: LOCKED AND LOADED

SEE IT ON THE DVD

SICK OF BEING MISTAKEN FOR JAK AND DAXTER, EVERYBODY'S SECOND FAVOURITE PLAYSTATION2 DOUBLE ACT GET SERIOUS.

> TYPE	PLATFORM
> PLAYERS	1
> OUT	NOVEMBER
> PUBLISHER	SONY
> PRICE	$99.95
> DEVELOPER	INSOMNIAC GAMES
> ONLINE	NO

IF YOU DON'T LIKE LOCKED AND LOADED then you don't like video games. It's as simple as that, as simple as AB, which is even simpler than ABC, which in itself is considerably simpler than the entire alphabet. You jump around, you smash giant robotic spiders into a thick mashy shit with an oversized wrench, you shoot wooden boxes and collect the power-ups contained therein. Nothing fancy, just a traditional platform game constructed from old school ideas and explosions that make you go "Oooooooooh" like a child at a firework display. Like we say, if this doesn't push your buttons then either your joypad isn't plugged in or you don't like games. And if you don't like games, then either you're a loser or you're a girl. And if you're a girl, could you please write in and tell us what it's like to be able to touch them whenever you want? Unmetered access. The Holy Grail. We've always wondered.

Locked and Loaded is a game with an infectious energy. Within the first half hour of play you've visited three hugely different game worlds – first a huge jet-propelled base, then a depressing swampland, then a Tokyo-style future-opolis – collected six different weapons, played several of the mini games and threaded your way through a densely woven asteroid field. It's a game in perpetual motion, afraid that if it so much as stands still a huge stench cloud of Other Stuff will quickly descend to lead you away to the dark continent of washing up, homework and self-abuse. This is why we like it. Because there's always something going on to make us forget how paper thin our lives are.

BLENDED TO PERFECTION

Before we go any further, let's take a closer look at that near-perfect blend of playing styles. The bulk of the game, as with *Ratchet* the first, has you running, jumping and hitting. By rights this should be less interesting that the contents of your grandmother's handbag (mint humbug, bingo marker, meat coupon, lilac hankie). And indeed it would be were it not for both the weapons and the explosions. The guns are long and supremely powerful, gobbing out endless streams of multi-coloured agony until you're the only thing in the room that hasn't been reduced to a smoking heap. It's a very simple pleasure,



LOCKED IN Expect a hostile reception everywhere you go.



SHELL HOCK Ammo can be bought from vending machines.



I'M ALL RIGHT, JAK We do prefer *Jak II: Renegade*, but there's not a lot in it.



GUN CONTROL The more you use your guns, the more powerful they become.



GLADIATOR, READY! Beat bosses for extra cash and equipment.

one that *PSW* will never tire of.

Fight your way through the end of the level, complete the core objectives and the jumping and running is replaced by flying and shooting, for often Ratchet must pilot his own course from one game world to the next, dog-fighting as many enemy ships as your PS2 can hold in its microscopic electronic brain without going cross-eyed and collapsing. In essence, *Locked and Loaded* is retro gaming – the ideas at work hark from the days when Bert Newton ruled over all of

> "THE IDEAS AT WORK HERE HAVE BEEN IN PLAY SINCE THE TWIN TITANS BETTY AND NUDGE RULED OVER ALL OF TV LAND."

TV Land like a barbecue sauce-coated curry puff – yet it still feels fresh, an original recipe cooked up from old ingredients.

There's nothing new about the two remaining mini-games either – the first has you entering a gladiatorial arena to see if you can outlast a seemingly endless stream of villains for cash, the second has you racing hoverbikes – yet both succeed in trapping your interest under a large glass jar and keeping it there until it can manage to kick a hole in the side and sneak out.

The bad news wears a familiar face; we had problems with game camera. It is possible to change the view manually with the right analogue stick, but often you're too busy to do so and lose health as a result. The only other slight snag is that the script isn't nearly as funny as it likes to think it is.

JAKKED OFF

The ultimate point of reference here has to be *Jak II: Renegade*, close cousin and bitter rival, and as much as we like *Locked and Loaded*, we'll always go elsewhere when forced to choose between the two. Because as charming as this is, it's less of a step forward than *Jak II*, a title that lumbers forth from the womb, lays down a heaving city and shouts, "Roam where you like."

And so the action platformer wars of 2003 draw to a close, *Jak II* winning by a stroke. *Locked and Loaded* is thus a non-essential but at the same time highly recommended title. It's never going to change your life – only you and the giggling demons writhing naked in hidden folders on your hard-drive can do that – but it will deduct a few weeks from your existence with the minimum of fuss. In the wash-up though, it might be more interesting to ask whether it will be this series or Naughty Dog's that stays in the Sony stable. And I hate to say it, but we're hoping it's *Jak*.

/ JON BROWN



A QUICK CLANK With Clank on your back you can jump further.

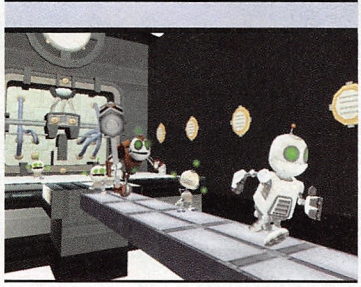


THE PERFECT CLANK

CLANK IS GOOD. NOT ONLY DOES HE GO GIANT AT ONE STAGE, HE ALSO HAS HIS OWN TROOP OF ROBOTS.



ATTACK! > The smallest of your droids can be sent in to attack enemies that you don't like the look of. Best thing is, if they die they respawn and jog back into the eye of the melee.



BRIDGE! > The bridge fellow, somewhat long in the middle body, lays himself over gaps to allow you and your robots access to the next section. Don't wear stilettos. That's just cruel.



LIFT! > Large blocks obstructing your way can be heaved away by a lifter robot. If you've ever played *Pikmin* on the GameCube (pardon us) you'll be instantly at home with all this.

PSW VERDICT

> UPPERS	> DOWNERS
> Shooting is fun	> Fairly linear
> And so is racing	> Nothing new
> And so is flying	> Smaller than *Jak II*
> And so is jumping	> Ratchet's still a dick

GRAPHICS	> Big explosions, bigger environments	8
SOUNDS	> So medicore, describing is difficult	5
GAMEPLAY	> A dense cloud of game types	9

OVERALL SCORE 8

A high-calibre platform title that, in the final analysis, doesn't quite have the level of invention required to nudge it into the upper echelons of our affections.



GIRL FIGHT Stupid bitchiness is especially prevalent amongst girls – in the game. In the *game*.



CROSS THE BOARDER Slap 'em and they'll hate you....



ALL THE WAY DOWN Any steeper and it'd be falling.



SPECIAL BRANCH The rail's the only way across – ouch!

PSW MUST BUY

SSX3

GRAB A BOARD. GRAB A FRIEND. GRAB SOME SKI GOGGLES, BECAUSE WHEN A GAME SHINES THIS BRIGHT, YOU'RE GOING TO NEED THEM.

SEE IT ON THE DVD

> TYPE	SNOWBOARDING
> PLAYERS	1-2
> OUT	NOVEMBER
> PUBLISHER	EA.
> PRICE	$99.95
> DEVELOPER	EA
> ONLINE	YES

YEAH BABY. THAT'S OUR REVIEW OF *SSX3*. Yeah baby. There it is again. Because the third episode of EA's snowboard series has still got it. There might not be a huge amount of newness in the snow-filled air, but *SSX3* amps up the excitement level even higher than its top quality older brethren. Don't believe us? Just wait. When you're high up above the mountains, when the air is thin and even the music has faded to a background drone, you'll still get an adrenaline rush like nothing else. And then the second you hit the ground – boomph – the music kicks back in at full volume and you chuckle and say to yourself, whether you want to or not: "Yeah baby." Seriously. You just do.

The gameplay remains the same as before – either pull off tricks for points in Freestyle or Big Air modes, or race against the slope's toughest boarders. But tricking's an integral part of *SSX* racing's appeal, and herein lies the subtle genius of the series. The more tricks you do, the more boost power you get. The more boost power you get, the higher you fly and the more tricks you can do. It means that simply getting down to the bottom of the slope is by no means enough. You'll have to pull off as huge a combo at every ramp as you can, just to give you enough oomph to blast ahead of the others. It's been done many times before, just never as well. Oh, and now you can Freeride down the entire mountain, facing off the odd challenge and picking up money along the way. Yeah, a bit like *Tony Hawk's*, only not really, as you can't backtrack at all. It's still fun to bomb all the way down the mountain though, after all, what is snowboarding apart from intensely choreographed falling?



FLYING HIGH Sufferers from vertigo need not apply to *SSX3*.

The snow on its own deserves some kind of Best Inanimate Object in a Video Game Oscar. There's piles of it, sucking you under in deep drifts. Skidding you along at breakneck speeds in the form of solid pack-ice. Sprinkling gently over you from the crags as you race underneath. Falling in huge boulders in avalanches in midnight caves. Actually glinting like diamonds in the cold morning sun. It's a testament to how wonderful the snow is that after half an hour you'll rarely notice the myriad effects. This is because they stop being effects: it's just what snow does when you're, you know, out on a snowboard run. Natural is what it is.

SNOW MOTION

And you'll get plenty of chances to look, because some of these races are big. How big? To reach the third peak, there's a race that requires you to complete it in under 19 minutes. That's not a series of laps or anything, oh no. That's straight down the mountain, through the assorted second peak courses, at 150 k's an hour, without a single





HIT THE KID Griff the tween isn't even the most annoying. But we still hate him.



WATCH AND LEARN Computer players will trick for speed too. The cheeky scamps.

break. Which gives you a chance to get to grips with the *über* tricks. Introduced in *SSX Tricky*, they've been superceded by some funky new "super *über*" moves that look the business. *Über* tricks rock. Super *über* tricks are better than morning sex at 4 in the afternoon (see the Get *Über* It box for more details). *Über. Über, über, über*. We've said it so many times, the word's lost all meaning.

ICICLE RACES

Nothing in life is perfect, and *SSX3* is no different. There's nothing here to convert the (precious few) haters who didn't get on with the first two games. The irritatingly cocky soundbites are back in force, the slopes haven't changed that much and the tricks can occasionally underwhelm. And then there're the boarders, who remain a bunch of arseholes. It's an eternal weekend for these sun-kissed, powder-loving skate twats. But as for the lack of changes, well, *SSX* wasn't broke, so we can't really complain if they didn't fix it. *SSX* fans will need to buy this just for the massive new courses, anyway. Perhaps most annoyingly, the free-roaming aspect of the game means you have to follow a branching trail down until you reach your desired course. It's effectively a pointless and lengthy menu system, and will end up adding minutes to your game. We no like.

"*ÜBER* TRICKS ROCK. SUPER *ÜBER* TRICKS ROCK HARDER THAN THE DARKNESS COVERING *ACE OF SPADES*."

But the reason *SSX3* is so good has nothing to do with wacky kids, or catchphrases, or tricks. It doesn't even have a lot to do with boarding. It's just that it's full of pure *game*. Nothing gets in the way of you, the gameplay, the speed and the feeling of near-complete control. You'll get more of a kick out of playing *SSX3* than you'll have had since... *SSX Tricky*. Hey, who cares if global warming means this Christmas is sunnier than June in Ibiza? With *SSX3*, you've got all the snow you'll ever need! God, we hate ourselves for writing things like that, but it's true. Leave us to our shame. Leave us now....

/JOFF BROWN



AAAIIIIIIII You'd need nads of steel to do this. Or a lobotomy.

LIKE, GET ÜBER IT!

SOMEHOW THEY'VE MADE THE TRICKS EVEN, WELL... *ÜBER*ER.



>> Build up your trick meter with dull, boring non-*über* tricks so you're ready to pull off a proper *über*trick. Pah. Non-*über*tricks, we hates 'em. We hates 'em forever!



>> Now you can do your crazy thang a hundred feet in the air. The ground shakes, solid diamonds fall from the sky and you'll trigger one letter to be lit in the *Über* meter.



>> Do four *übers* and you'll fill the bar and pull off the... wait for it... super *über*! It's a very fine trick indeed. At this point, we all soiled our pants. Front and back. Seriously.



>> Now you can try and light your super meter. Light it to get... infinite super-boost! Which, to be honest, was a bit of a disappointment. We firmly expected the world to explode.

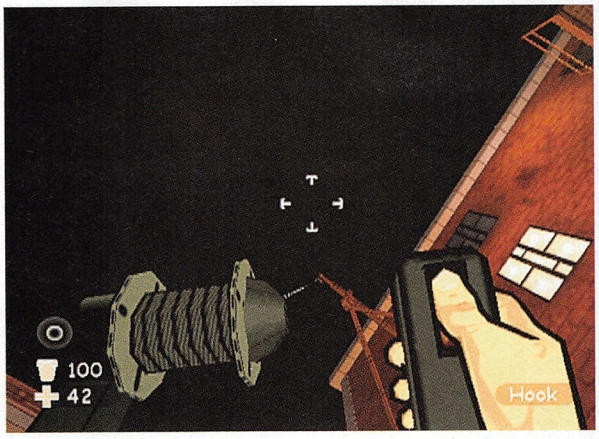
PSW VERDICT

> UPPERS	> DOWNERS
> Glorious snowscapes	> Menus are annoying
> Near-perfect gameplay	> Nothing much new here
> Tricking's still fun	> Could have been bigger
> Courses are amazing	> Boarders get on our tits

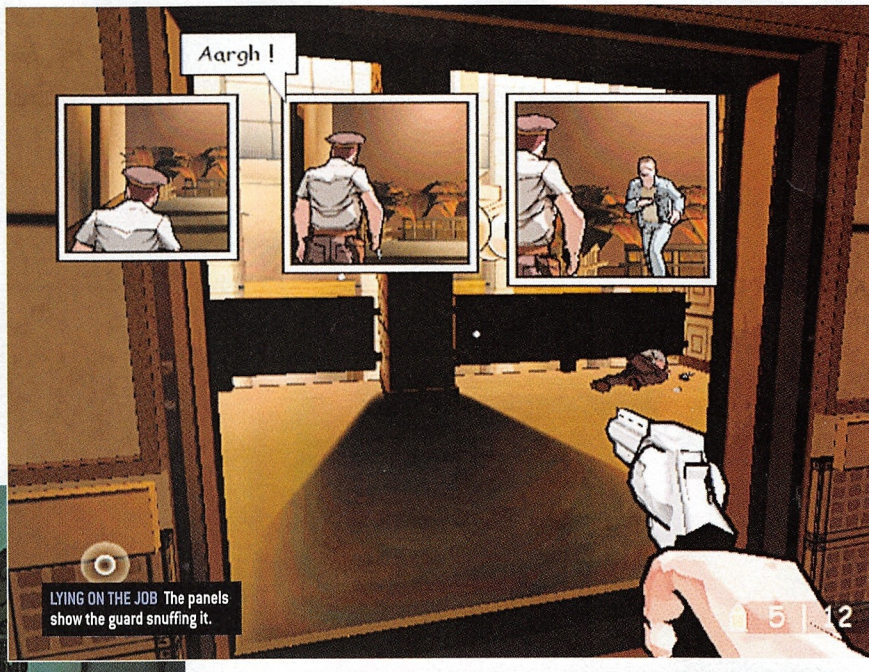
GRAPHICS	> Stunning snow-vistas, detailed characters	9
SOUNDS	> Occasionally old but nicely credible music	7
GAMEPLAY	> One more slope... where's my evening gone?	9

OVERALL SCORE
Think the gameplay of *SSX Tricky*, with a few tweaks and some absolutely stunning courses. Think luscious mountains and unbelievable speed. Think *SSX3*. Then buy it.

9



HANGER-ON The hook is a tricky gadget to get the hang of, but is often needed.









XIII

NOT FOR THE TRISKADECAPHOBICS

SEE IT ON THE DVD

> TYPE	FPS
> PLAYERS	1-4
> OUT	NOW
> PUBLISHER	UBI SOFT
> PRICE	$99.95
> DEVELOPER	UBI SOFT
> ONLINE	YES

BASED ON A LONG RUNNING BELGIAN SERIES OF graphic novels, *XIII* is the latest in a long line of games to utilise a rendering method called cell shading, in which models are rendered with swathes of flat colour to emulate the look of cartoons of comics. A running joke in the office is that cell shading is becoming this season's lens flare - a technique everyone wants to use but few people do right. Luckily *XIII* is one of those games that does it right. Absolutely right as a matter of fact. Take note any developers who may be reading this - before planning a game that utilises cell shading, play *XIII* to see how to do it well. *XIII* (that's pronounced thirteen, not ex eye eye eye or xiii!) charts the story of an amnesiac soldier whose identity has been altered to resemble that of the real XIII, a recently deceased member of a nefarious global conspiracy with members numbering from XX all the way up to I. As the fake titular hero it's up to players to survive, uncover the conspiracy and ultimately discover what the hell is actually going on in the world.



Like many modern first person shooters, *XIII* combines a number of styles ranging from stealth to straight shooting to puzzle solving, all of which are carried out with a great deal of style. The basic shooting action is excellent with a wide range of weapons including favourites such as shotguns and sub-machineguns to throwing knives and crossbows and some excellent enemy AI. Level design is also nice and varied with locations ranging from bank vaults to the Swiss Alps. The frequent stealth levels are also well done with a standout being a very tense escape from a mental institution. The single player game is relatively short (a good player can finish it in around 10 hours) but *XIII* has some decent legs for replay with excellent multiplayer options where up to four players can duke it out head to head. Multiplayer options include such rugged classics as deathmatch, team deathmatch and capture the flag as well as an interesting new option called Power-Up in which all weapon and armour pickups are randomised and hidden in anonymous crates.

Although action wise the game isn't what you would call groundbreaking, *XIII* features some of the best and cleverest graphics to come around in quite a while. Any look at the screenshots will show you how good the game actually looks but you have to see it in motion to witness the design genius that has gone into it. To truly emulate the feel of playing a graphic novel, *XIII* uses a number of characteristics fundamental to the medium - creative placement of frames and frequent onomatopoeia (word that when read aloud sound like its sound, for those of you who don't like big and mostly useless words). Although the majority of the onscreen action

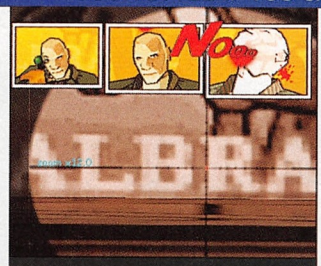
TALK OF THE 'TOON

IT'S NO USE US RATTLING ON ABOUT THE COMIC BOOK STYLE IF YOU CAN'T SEE HOW IT'S USED.



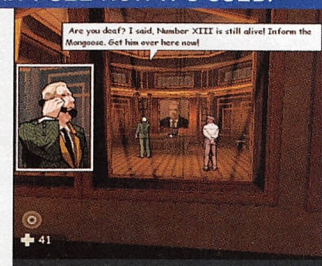
FOOTSTEPS

Instead of looking at a boring old radar, see the location and proximity of an enemy by the position and size of the "tap" cartoon words.



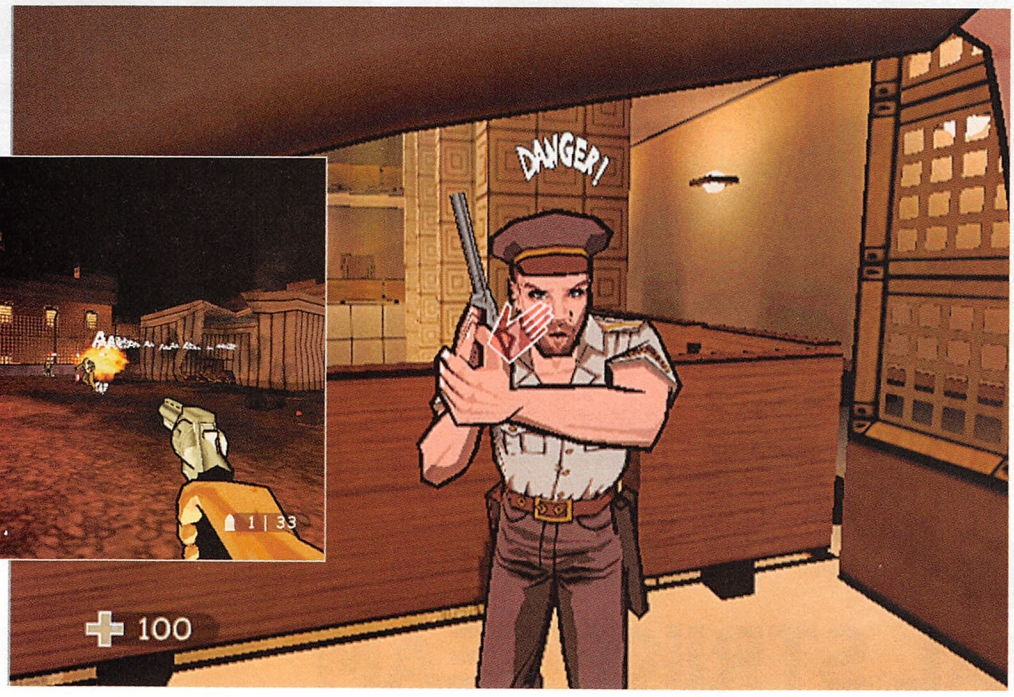
HEADSHOTS

Three pop-up panels appear in real-time as the bullet from your sniper rifle tears through an enemy's grey matter and out the other side.



CLUES

Whenever something significant happens in the story, a cutaway panel takes a closer look. Designed to make you go: "ooh, did you see that?"



takes place just like a normal FPS with the majority of the screen showing the player's eye view of the surroundings (with the exception of health and the like), *XIII* frequently overlays separate frames over the main image to show events such as the approach of a new group of enemies, plot specific items and moments or head shots. Whilst this looks absolutely wonderful and really brings the comic book feel to life it also does cause a few problems. Frames showing headshots are all well and good - it's very satisfying to see the results of your handy work from three different angles, but when they appear in the middle of combat, potentially obscuring a number of enemies intent on making your value considerably less that 13 they can become very frustrating. The onomatopoeia on the other hand is nothing but brilliant. On a strictly aesthetic level the on screen words look great, whether they be the "TA TA TA TA TA" of a machinegun or the "AARGH!" of a man on fire. The visual "sounds" also come in very handy during the stealth levels as standing still enables XIII to see guard routes highlighted by the "Tap Tap Tap" of their footsteps.

Fresh from his grand adventure doing nothing of note since leaving the *X-Files*, David Duchovny lends his voice acting talents to the character of *XIII* and is just about perfect, lending the right amount of world-weary cynicism and incredulity to the role. Just as a brief aside - what is it with David Duchovny and conspiracies? After umpteen years doing the *X-Files* you would have thought that he was sick of the entire thing. Be that as it may, he does a wonderful job, as do the other voice actors. The soundtrack itself is good for the most part but fairly forgettable - not that that's such a bad thing considering that there's nothing more annoying than having a game tune stuck in your head all day whilst you're trying to work.

/DANIEL WILKS

PSW VERDICT

> UPPERS	> DOWNERS
> Steady framerate	> Iffy controls
> Great plot	> Short
> Fast action	> Allies are a hindrance
> Cell shading	> We've seen a lot of it before

GRAPHICS	> Cell shading the way it should be.	9
SOUNDS	> What is it about Duchovny and conspiracies?	8
GAMEPLAY	> Single player is quick but multiplayer is timeless	8

OVERALL SCORE 8

Great plot and awesome graphics combine to make *XIII* one of the most compelling shooters around.

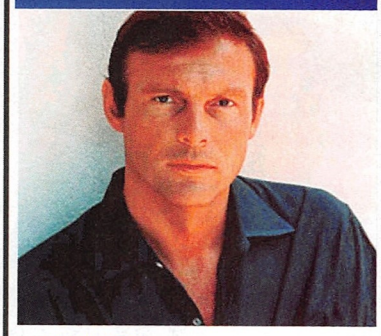
THE TRUTH IS IN HERE

WHO'S WHO IN THE CONSPIRACY-LADEN WORLD OF *XIII* – AND THE VOICE-ACTING TALENT YOU MAY OR MAY NOT RECOGNISE.



> DAVID DUCHOVNY

PLAYS? Amnesiac XIII, who might also be secret agent Steve Rowland and a President killer. Cripes! Duchovny left Agent Mulder and her *X-Files* behind to get away from aliens and government conspiracy theories. Subsequent work includes alien "comedy", *Evolution*, and now this game about a government conspiracy. Did well for himself then. Ahem.



> ADAM WEST

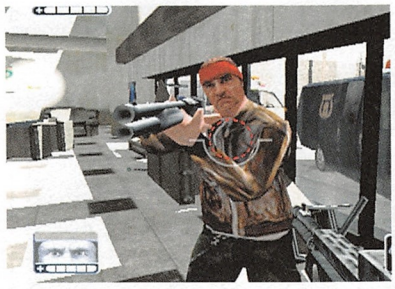
PLAYS? General Carrington, the US military's chief of staff who's conducting his own investigation into the assassination.
The former Caped Crusader has done bugger all of note since his last kerpow in 1968, and has seemingly been chosen solely because the game features cartoon text. At least we don't have to see him squeezed into a costume.



> EVE

PLAYS? Major Jones, who assists General Carrington with his snooping around and has apparently worked with XIII before.
She's black and streetwise, which automatically means a rapper must play the part. It could have been any interchangeable R&B/rap artist and we wouldn't have noticed the difference. Unless 50 Cent fancied a go.

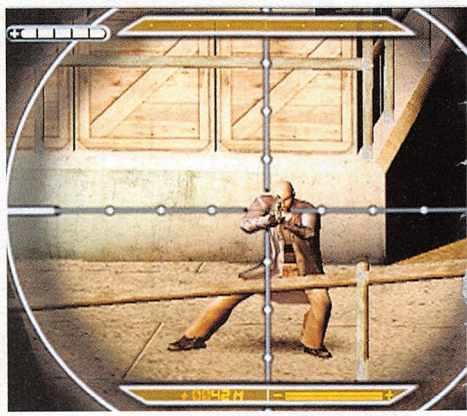








BOYZ IN THEIR HOODS Getting this close to enemies is easy.



SWAT: GLOBAL STRIKE TEAM

SEE IT ON THE DVD

A PO-FACED SHOOTER SMOTHERED IN BUCKETLOADS OF REALISM. BUT SINCE WHEN HAS ACCURACY BEEN A SUBSTITUTE FOR FUN?

> TYPE	SHOOTING
> PLAYERS	1-2
> OUT	NOVEMBER
> PUBLISHER	VIVENDI
> PRICE	$99.95
> DEVELOPER	ARGONAUT GAMES
> ONLINE	NO

OK, OK. HANDS UP WHICH GAMES THINK they're intelligent. You, *Metal Gear Solid 2*? Yes, of course you are. Have a hobnob. You, *Grand Theft Auto: Vice City*? Well, people think you're a bit of a thug, but underneath you're a real whizz-kid. A pink wafer for you. Who's that at the back, sticking their hand up and making eager groaning noises? Why, it's *SWAT: Global Strike Team*. Ahahahaha. No, son. You're not clever. You just think you're clever because you come from a PC game family and you're all "tactical". Well, let us tell you, here at *PSW* that don't mean jack. No biscuits for you, son. Out! Out of the *PSW* classroom!

OK, so that may be a bit harsh, but it's essentially true. *SWAT*'s another one of those squad-based shooters that keep cropping up these days. We're fairly sure the people who make them think they're The Future of Games. We're not convinced. You're part of some made-up near-future strike team that's mysteriously empowered to sort out conflicts all over the globe. Americans, we think they call 'em. Your task is to infiltrate enemy hideouts with the minimum amount of fuss, and kill everyone.

So what does it play like? Most of the time, you control Mathias Kincaid, team leader and old hand at the anti-terrorism game. Occasionally you'll find yourself transposed into the fit body of female sniper Lee, as she attempts to pick off far-off criminals.

What this comes down to is: you enter a room and neutralise everyone inside it. Then you move onto the next one as quickly and painlessly as possible, without hurting any innocents. It's probably the way these things happen in real life, but oddly it's not the most enthralling concept for a game. Like most games without a radar, stealth doesn't really play a part. It's mostly a case of entering a room and either shooting or shouting down everyone in it. Perhaps the most original bit of thinking is that you can't just blow everyone away, they have to be shooting at you, or you'll be in breach of regulations. This means that if you're going to knock out someone from behind, you have to use your less-than-lethal weapons like the tranquilliser dart. Play a level again, and sometimes enemies will come from different places, providing a welcome change to the routine of shooting your way through each time and stopping you from getting too complacent.

Fortunately, you're also gifted with classic video game resilience, allowing you to take several shots to the chest without dying. There may not seem much point in having people leap out at you if you can let them shoot hopelessly at you as you run up and hit them in the face, but it does mean you get the chance to use non-lethal force a bit more. If you manage to stop killing everyone and arrest them instead, the game rewards you with medals, plus extra features like movie sequences, which should keep you playing for a while. But by far the best way to play is in the ten different co-operative levels, covering areas with a partner. The problem is this: it's just not that fun. There, we said it.

SWAT'S THE PROBLEM?

And while we're bitching, let's talk about the way *SWAT* looks. Because it doesn't look great. It looks like all the other supposedly tactical squad-based games before it, only half as good. Some walls and objects have got that horrible, horrible blurry look that grabs you by the throat and screams

A DAY IN THE LIFE OF...

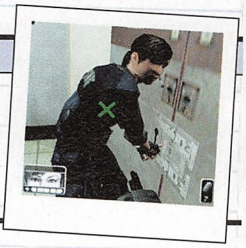
...MATTHIAS KINCAID, TERRORIST KILLER AND ALL-ROUND VIDEOGAME HERO



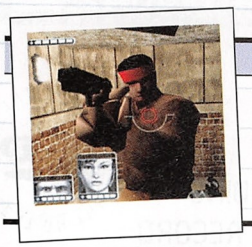
Another day on the job, and I'm stuck in the London Underground. This *SWAT* team is global, you see. Our jobs take us anywhere. As long as there's corridors.



Spotted this poster on the tube station. Those crazy limeys sure take their advertising seriously! I must remember to pick up a can of this stuff for the folks back home.

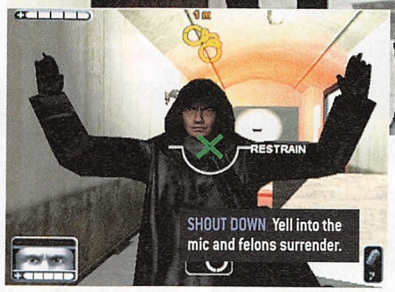


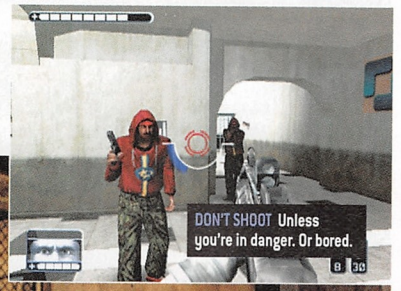
This is Lee, who I really like. I'm not a bummer – that's her surname, you see?. She snipes, and also picks locks. But there's only ever locks to pick when she's around. That's odd...



This is a bad guy. He shot me full in the face, but I didn't even flinch! I love *SWAT* and everything it stands for. Which is Special Weapons and Tactics, obviously! Har de har!









"THEY DIDN'T TRY VERY HARD, DID THEY?" at you until you cry. People move around like puppets under the control of a horse-tranquilised child-molester, and look like they've been hewn out of jelly with the world's largest spoon. Even the reds and greens look a dirty grey. In the sci-fi future year of 2003, where robot dogs live in our homes, music exists on microchips and Geri Halliwell's baps can instantly grow to an enormous size, this just isn't good enough. We know it's in the service of making everything look "real", but it doesn't really work.



GREEN MEANIE Night vision goggles. Well, what a surprise...

> "YOU JUST THINK YOU'RE CLEVER BECAUSE YOU'RE FROM A PC GAME FAMILY. THAT DON'T MEAN JACK TO US, SON."

OOH, YOU GIRLY *SWAT*

The one silver bullet in *SWAT's* pistol is the innovative use of voice recognition to bark commands to other characters. Get hold of a USB mike and headphones, and you can yell at enemies to surrender or comrades to comply – and they do. Does it work? Yes, pretty well, and when it doesn't it's a great excuse to yell at the screen some more until it does. Is it worth it? Um, not really. We're not saying there's anything wrong with the voice-recognition technology, it's just that the same commands can be issued with an elegant press of a directional pad button with far less stress. Using the mic is fine if you a) desperately want to be a *SWAT* team guy in the real world, or b) have a lot of anger to get out, but we really can't recommend it for any gamer who can still show his face amongst other mortals.

At the end of the day, *SWAT* ticks all the right boxes (multiplayer, tactical, voice recognition) but lets itself down by just not being that amazing. The recent *SOCOM: Navy Seals* provides a more tense game, with the added bonus of online play. If you'd like a truly great single-player squaddy title, try the unmatchably atmospheric *Freedom Fighters* or wait for *Ghost Recon: Jungle Storm*. OK?

/ JOFF BROWN

PSW VERDICT

> UPPERS	> DOWNERS
> You can yell at the TV	> Looks dull, plays dull
> Co-op modes are fun	> Should be online really
> Enemies change places	> Makes socks look exciting
> Voices add atmosphere	> Not really very tactical

GRAPHICS	> Bland baddies, unenticing environments	5
SOUNDS	> Bad acting, but you can do the shouting	7
GAMEPLAY	> Simpler than you'd expect, but not bad	6

OVERALL SCORE 6

Not quite the game it should have been. The voice recognition stuff is a neat addition to the tactical shooting, but otherwise it offers little to prise you away from the superior *SOCOM*.









WRC3

SECONDS AFTER *COLIN MCRAE* COMPLETES HIS FOURTH STAGE TO A STANDING OVATION, *WRC* SLIPS INTO THIRD AND ATTEMPTS TO RECLAIM THE TRACK RECORD.

SEE IT ON THE DVD

> TYPE	DRIVING
> PLAYERS	1-4
> OUT	NOW
> PUBLISHER	SONY
> PRICE	$99.95
> DEVELOPER	EVOLUTION STUDIOS
> ONLINE	NO

WRC3'S STAGES ARE THE MOST IMPRESSIVE we've ever seen. For proof of this, come with us to the French Riviera to take part in the third stage of the rally of Monte Carlo. You begin on a sunny mountainside with only 100 yards of road in front of you. Having crept forward to peer over the edge, like a child at the top of a slide, you quickly come to the realisation that you're in heaven. How else to explain your vantage point, from where you can see the entire world laid out before you like a dirty tablecloth? Fearing that you're minutes away from being invited to share tea and crumpets with God and Slim Dusty, you flee and begin working your way down the mountainside at extreme speeds. At the bottom – you've just fallen about 200 feet in seconds – you're diverted left into a small village, then over a bridge and onto another winding mountain road. Now you're working your way back up towards the pearly gates, moving two feet skywards for every five feet forwards. Your ears pop. Or was that your engine backfiring? As you rise and rise and rise, snow starts falling, making road conditions hazardous and calling for a hasty reunion with brake pedal, which up until this point has been completely ignored.

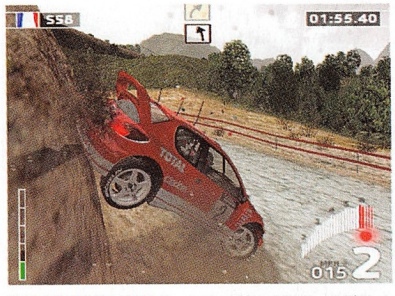


The climate often changes more than once during a *WRC3* stage. Monte Carlo goes from snow to sun back to snow again. Turkey (the only new country) starts out sunny, then gets wet, then snowy. All of which leaves you with just one problem: what to wear? Coat or jumper? It might be warm when you get in the car, but by the time you get out again it could be freezing. Why not wear a body-warmer? Best of both worlds.

Like so many of *WRC3*'s stages, Monte Carlo number three is a beautiful jumble of extreme dips, punishing hills, tight hairpins and breathtaking views. The game looks this good throughout, even if small objects like posts and plants have a nasty habit of suddenly popping into view. More importantly, it also plays exceptionally well, the cars handling with a level of assuredness you'd expect of a big-name rally series now into its third instalment.

BUILD ME UP BUTTERCUP

But before you get into the race proper, the build-up. Your natural gamer's impulse tugs at your sleeve and tells you to skip through all the flannel

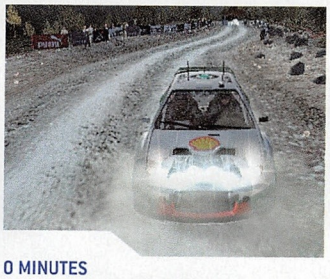


BLOWING HOT AND COLD The weather is constantly changing.

WHAT'S THE DAMAGE?

WHICH RALLY GAMES LETS YOU SMASH UP YOUR CAR THE MOST – *WRC3* OR *COLIN McRAE 04*? FUNNY YOU SHOULD ASK...

WRC3



0 MINUTES

You've literally just driven over the start line. So far, you've managed to avoid walls, buildings, cliffs, spectators and... look out for that....

WHAT'S THE DAMAGE?

None at all. Everything is rosy. Mmm. Love that new car smell.

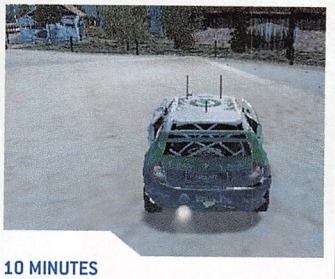


5 MINUTES

How did that happen? It's not like you were steaming along at 80mph and slid off the road into an oak tree. No. Wait a second. There was that time...

WHAT'S THE DAMAGE?

The windows have popped out. And that windscreen looks a touch chipped.



10 MINUTES

After a couple of flips, a few tumbles, several prangs and a sprinkling of light scrapes, your car is worth a tenth of its original asking price. Unlucky. Seriously unlucky.

WHAT'S THE DAMAGE?

All the glass has gone, it's covered in dents and the doors are knackered.



15 MINUTES

Sadly, that's as busted up as it's going to get. We hurl it off clifftops and through ravines, but nothing else is falling off. Bit of a disappointment really.

WHAT'S THE DAMAGE?

The interior light doesn't work and the radio only picks up medium wave.

COLIN McRAE RALLY 04



0 MINUTES

What are those blokes looking at? Haven't they ever seen a rally car before? Arseholes. Take a photo, why don't you? It'd last longer. Jesus. Some people.

WHAT'S THE DAMAGE?

There isn't any. The seats are still wrapped in their plastic covers.

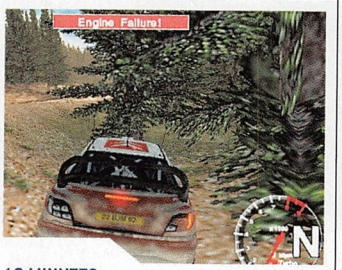


5 MINUTES

Changing the CD, talking on your mobile and cradling a open yoghurt with your groin at the same time as driving into a rockface can seriously damage your car.

WHAT'S THE DAMAGE?

You've lost the bonnet, the front bumper and the owner's manual.



10 MINUTES

Oh, this can't be good. Nothing written in a red box with an exclamation mark at the end has ever been good. Why aren't we moving any more?

WHAT'S THE DAMAGE?

The engine has gone, two of the four tyres are flat and someone's farted.



15 MINUTES

The stage is over. It's taken slightly longer than you would've liked – getting out of ditches when you're engine isn't working is tough – but at least your legs still work.

WHAT'S THE DAMAGE?

All four tyres are blown and one of the hooks on the parcel shelf has come off.

CONCLUSION > So which game lets you do the most damage? *Colin McRae 04* by a country mile. *WRC3's* cars are much sturdier, able to withstand just about anything.

so you can get on with the driving. Don't. Ignoring *WRC3*'s pre-rally build-up would be like sprinting through the Louvre, past the *Mona Lisa*, past Caravaggio's *Death of the Virgin*, past Charles Cressent's magnificently decadent wall-clock *Love Conquering Time*, to get to a three-inch Blu-Tack sculpture of Sandra Sully crafted by *The New Adventures of Superman*'s Dean Cain. Everything you could possibly want to know about the upcoming stage is contained within the velvet-lined menu screens before you, from driver profiles and team histories to video fly-overs of the course and simple, large-print set-up options. Best of all, you can explode your car, a function that sends doors, windscreens, wheels and side-panels flying through the ether, as though under the influence of a minor nuclear explosion. And it



> "THINK 1980S ROBOT EJECTING KRAFTWORK CD FROM EDDIE MURPHY'S BANG AND OLUFSEN STEREO."

makes a really cool noise. Think 1980s robot ejecting Kraftwork CD from Eddie Murphy's Bang and Olufsen stereo.

What of the cars? What of them indeed? They look very nice, gathering pretty dirt and dents as you slam them into corners and then back out again. Much like the courses, the presentation (using Primal Scream songs to soundtrack the entire game doesn't hurt) and the graphics, the cars are several cuts above the usual. In fact, just about everything you can think of receives a thick green tick in the box marked "extraordinary". The multiplayer, the campaign game, the sound, everything. Everything except the replays, which are strangely hollow. Who cares right? You never watch them anyway.

We know exactly what you're going to ask us as we begin to wrap up this review, bearing in mind that the other month we gave *Colin McRae 04* a nine out of ten and that this month we're giving *WRC3* the same score. You're going to ask us if it's possible that there might be a Credible Hulk somewhere in an alternate universe, who stays very calm and who wears Carharrt trousers and has immaculate taste in food, wine and music? The answer is a definite no. And then you're going to ask us, is *WRC3* better than *Colin McRae Rally 04*? To this, our reply is emphatic, delivered with confidence as we bang a fist on the table. Maybe! The stages are most definitely better, and the official rally licence acquired using money you've donated to Sony over the last eight or so years adds a satisfying real-world twang to the whole thing, but the actual driving – the physics and the damage-modelling and so on – aren't quite up to the high standards of Colin the fourth.

Sorry to sit on the fence here, but ultimately it depends on what you're looking for. *WRC3* is the better looking; *Colin 04* the more realistic. *WRC3* is the more accurate in terms of rally data; *Colin 04* the more challenging in terms of rally driving. Why limit yourself to just one rally game anyway? It's not like you're short of money. And if you are, what were grandmothers invented for? Just tell her you sold a kidney to medical science and that you need to buy it back. *WRC3* – it's better than your family.

/ JON BROWN

PSW VERDICT

> UPPERS	> DOWNERS
> Amazing courses	> Replays are duff
> Pleasing on the eye	> Items pop up
> Ultra-lavish presentation	> Chocolate is bad for you
> Exploding cars	> Office is hot today

GRAPHICS	> See! The never-ending countryside	10
SOUNDS	> Hear! The throaty warble of a Ford Focus	8
GAMEPLAY	> Feel! The best handling this side of *McRae*	9

OVERALL SCORE 9

Five points for the tracks, three points for the cars and two points for the presentation. Minus one for the lack of either explosions or photon grenades makes nine. Scientific, no?



GRANDPA On the nurses' shift change over, Grandpa attempted a daring escape.



NO SOONER No sooner had he left, the police were called in. "Shoot on sight!" They cried.





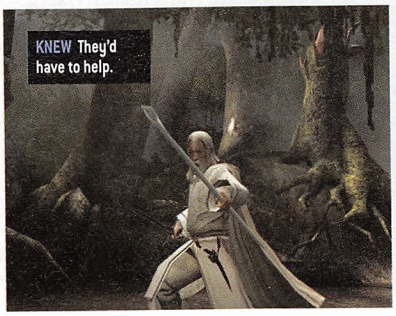
LORD OF THE RINGS: THE RETURN OF THE KING

ELVIS IS STILL THE ONE TRUE KING

> TYPE	ACTION
> PLAYERS	1-2
> OUT	NOVEMBER
> PUBLISHER	EA
> PRICE	$99.95
> DEVELOPER	EA

WHAT DO YOU GET IF YOU TAKE EA'S LORD OF THE *Rings: The Two Towers*, tweak the graphics engine, add in meaningful objectives and raise the level of difficulty? It's not really a trick question when you look at the title at the top of the page. EA's new *Lord of the Rings* epic, *The Return of the King* is like *The Two Towers* in nearly every way, only bigger, badder and a damn sight more difficult. It's also very addictive and a whole heap of fun. Like *The Two Towers*, *RotK* (*Return of the King*) is based on two films rather than one, chronicling events from the previously released *Lord of the Rings: The Two Towers* and the final part of the trilogy, the upcoming *Return of the King*.

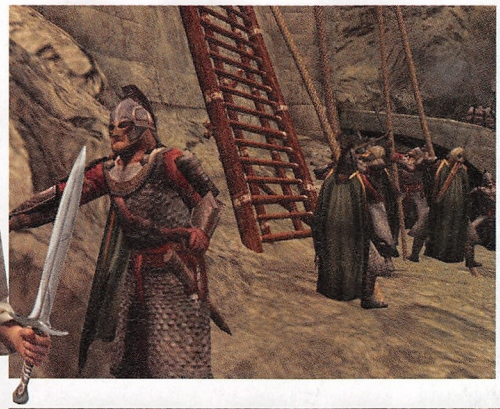
As you may have guessed, combat is the major element of *Return of the King* and we're pleased to say that it is an absolute blast. Like the original game, each character has three basic hand-to-hand attacks that can be upgraded through experience as well as a ranged attack. Although basic combos are available from the beginning of the game, *Return of the King* really comes into it's own after the player has accumulated a few levels of experience and bought some of the more advanced combos and attacks, allowing players to do such things as take down orcs in a single combo, damage a few enemies with an area of effect attack or turn a block into a devastating counter attack. Although the combat is the major focus of the action, meaningful objectives stop the levels from ever becoming too repetitive. Whereas the first game didn't seem to have too much to do with the movies it was based on other than the characters and general layout of the levels, *Return of the King* features numerous objectives per mission that directly reflect the events of the film. Various stages may see the player fighting off hordes of orcs whilst trying to keep Frodo out of sight of the ever-watchful Ring Wraiths as the faithful Sam, or rushing around the ramparts of a great citadel as Gandalf the White, trying to knock down siege ladders and towers before the ramparts become overrun by the orcish hordes. Aside from unlocking extra combos that can be bought either for a single character or for all available characters, experience can be used to purchase character specific powers such as new



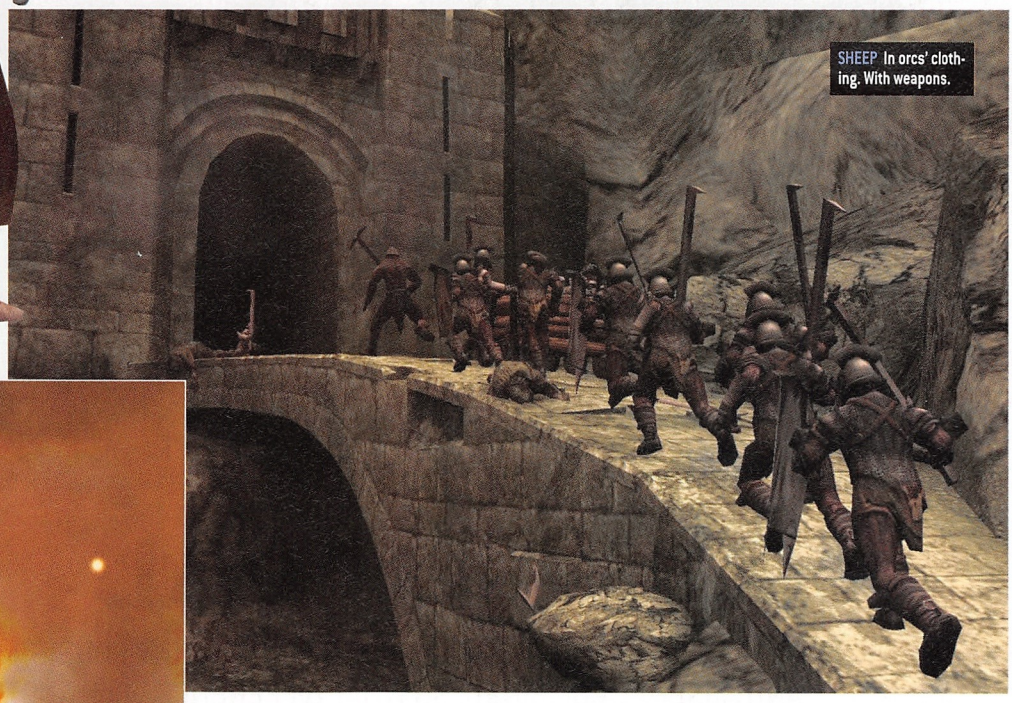


HOBBIT RAGE

If you don't believe someone who is not even 4' tall (and who isn't a Dwarf) can be a badass, turn your attention to Samwise Gamgee, the world's baddest Hobbit. He may be small in stature but the little guy can hold his own amongst his far larger compatriots. Although the idea may sound vaguely ridiculous, probably the greatest compliment we can pay the game is saying that at no point during the action does Sam the badass become anything less than a believable character. Kudos EA. And yes, we know this is Frodo.







SHEEP In orcs' clothing. With weapons.



and damaging spells for Gandalf. Whilst this may be enough to keep people coming back for more, EA has gone even further in making the game addictive by including a number of characters that can only be unlocked at certain levels - whilst it's possible to play Sam at the outset, Frodo only becomes playable at the later stages of the game.

Return of the King is a spectacular looking game full of excellent animation, great textures and levels that never, ever feel empty. Although there are a few levels that feature only a handful of characters making their way through empty corridors and the like, the vast majority of levels in *RotK* take place during pitched battles and during them players will never feel like they're the only ones on the battlefield. Whilst you're fighting for your life in the centre of the screen the battle rages around you with literally dozens of warriors of various races battling to the death, all with nary a drop in framerate. The effect is nothing short of exhilarating. Although not powered by the game engine, some of the most outstanding features of the game are the frequent cutscenes taken directly from the films that segue smoothly into the action. Even better still are the number of unlockable featurettes that include behind the scenes footage, interviews with the actors (all of whom voiced the same characters they played in the film) and other titbits that Tolkien fans will go gaga over. The soundtrack perfectly compliments the onscreen action, liberally taking swathes from the movie soundtrack and supplying some of the most satisfying sword clashes we've heard in a while. As we mentioned before, all of the actors from the trilogy supplied their talents to the voice acting of the game and the results are predictably superb.



HIS DRUGS Had some side-effects.

"BETTER STILL ARE THE NUMBER OF UNLOCKABLE FEATURETTES THAT INCLUDE BEHIND THE SCENES FOOTAGE, INTERVIEWS AND OTHER TIDBITS"

Unfortunately there are a few little faults with the game that can seriously detract from the enjoyment of the title - the chief two being some "interesting" camera angles and the lack of a decent map. Although undeniably cinematic, some of the camera angles utilised in the game make it rather difficult to see the action on screen. It's not a deadly flaw but unless you're some kind of terrifying games cyborg you'll probably have to restart a few levels because of them. Likewise the lack of a decent map isn't a killing flaw considering that most of the levels are very linear but the lack of a "you are here" style marker makes it very difficult to find your way during some of the levels, especially the aforementioned Gandalf on the ramparts battle. Be that as it may, *Lord of the Rings: The Return of the King* is sure to please fans of the first game is should also make quite a few new fans as well.

DANIEL WILKS

PSW VERDICT

> UPPERS	> DOWNERS
> Combos	> Some Slowdown
> Upgrades	> Frustratingly hard
> Unlockables	> Save points
> Co-op	> Some camera issues

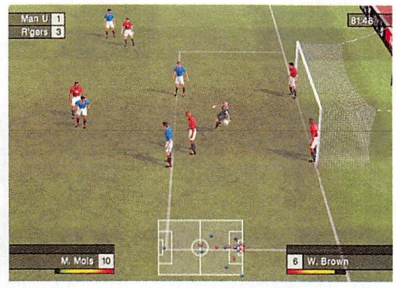
GRAPHICS	> It's impressive what the PS2 can do	9
SOUNDS	> Movie soundtrack + war = good	9
GAMEPLAY	> Three campaigns and tons of unlockables	8

OVERALL SCORE 8

Lord of the Rings: Return of the King isn't much different from *The Two Towers* but hey, if it ain't broke, don't fix it.











CLUB FOOTBALL

THERE ARE MORE FOOTBALL GAMES ON PS2 THAN FOREIGN PLAYERS AT CHELSEA AND ARSENAL COMBINED. SO WHAT DIFFERENCE WILL ANOTHER 17 MAKE?

> TYPE	SOCCER
> PLAYERS	1-4
> OUT	OCTOBER
> PUBLISHER	CODEMASTERS
> PRICE	$89.95
> DEVELOPER	CODEMASTERS
> ONLINE	NO

OK, OK, WE WERE ALL SET UP FOR A BIG disappointment here, but *Club Football* hasn't ruined our week. Somewhere between *Pro Evolution Soccer 3* (easily the best football game so far, let down by its lack of official teams, names, venues and competitions) and *FIFA 2004* (vague, unresponsive and imprecise gameplay, propped up by excellent presentation and stacks of officialness), *Club Football* borrows bits from both and adds some innovations of its own.

The whole "thing" about *Club Football* is that it's available in 17 different varieties, each themed around a specific team. This one here is *Man Utd Club Football*. The other teams? Arsenal, Aston Villa, Chelsea, Leeds United, Liverpool, Celtic, Rangers, Real Madrid, Borussia Dortmund, Hamburg, Bayern Munich, Ajax, Barcelona, AC Milan, FC Internazionale, and Juventus. Here's how it works. Let's say you're an Arsenal fan.



GAFFER TAPE Cut-scenes show the manager barking orders.

You'd probably buy a dog turd if it had an Arsenal badge on it, so obviously you'll buy the Arsenal game. Then you play a Premiership season as Arsenal. It's got Arsenal insignia all over it, pictures of Arsenal players for the loading screens and all kinds of Arsenal-themed stuff to unlock. Wallow in its pure, unadulterated Arsenalness. It's 110% Arsenal, with Arsenal sauce on top. Brilliant if you support one of the 17 teams. No so great if you don't. Even more painful if you do support one of the 17, but can't find your team's in Australia - Atari have only imported a select few. It's online shopping time...

Club Football immediately shepherds you into creating yourself within the game. Unless you're really rather strange looking, the player creator should be able to come up with a reasonable representation of your actual self. Divvy up a bank of points into speed, technique, and other skill categories, and your replicant is complete. You can even pick a commentary name from a huge vault of voice recordings. From here it's straight on into the first game of the season.

Initially you're just a squad player, so switch yourself for one of the first-team regulars. You'll want to be scoring goals, right? Who ever dreamed of becoming a professional defender? So get yourself up front, or at least in midfield. Fiddle around with the shamelessly *PES*-inspired formation options if you want, then get on with the action. *Club Football* employs a simple but effective trick to win over *PES2* addicts – the controls are exactly the same. Bar a couple of *PES2*'s finer touches, such as the pretty but useless step-over, it's all here, and all on the same buttons. Thank God for that.

Club Football plays well – much better than *FIFA*. Shooting is a bit of a lottery, which for a football game isn't great. General passing, tackling and running around is, however, pretty tight, so it ends up being more about getting into scoring positions than actually honing your shot technique. Matchday comes complete with the familiar tones of Gary Lineker and Barry Davies, tossing out woolly but relevant comments before, during and after the games. All we need now is the game to be available in all team flavours (like, er, where's Newcastle United – they finished THIRD last season!!!). Next year perhaps. If not, then we'll just play more *Pro Evo*. No biggie.

/ LEE NUTTER

PSW VERDICT

> UPPERS	> DOWNERS
> Immersive Career mode	> No Training mode
> Sound gameplay	> Needs more teams
> Reassuringly official	> No internationals
> Lineker and Davies. Nice	> Not as good as *PES3*

GRAPHICS	> Recognisable players, but low detail	6
SOUNDS	> Authentic chants, good commentary	8
GAMEPLAY	> We prefer it to *FIFA*, but it's unpolished	7

OVERALL SCORE 7

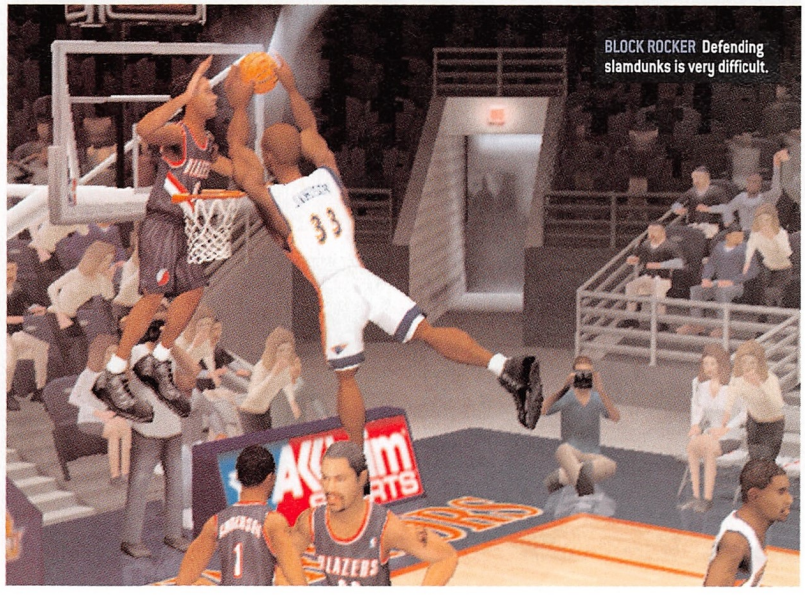
We had this one down on our *PSW* pools coupon as a scoreless bore draw. Thankfully, we were proved wrong over the course of an entertaining game peppered with schoolboy errors.



BASKET CASE Build up your gauge for big dunks.






BLOCK ROCKER Defending slamdunks is very difficult.



OOPS Always be on the look out for the alley-oop.

NBA JAM 2004

THE ONCE RAPID-FIRE PULSE OF AN ARCADE CLASSIC SLOWS TO HALF-SPEED, BEFORE THREATENING TO PETER OUT ALL TOGETHER.

> TYPE	BASKETBALL
> PLAYERS	1-6
> OUT	NOW
> PUBLISHER	ACCLAIM
> PRICE	$99.95
> DEVELOPER	ACCLAIM
> ONLINE	NO

WHAT RILES US MOST OF ALL ABOUT NBA JAM 2004 is its lack of atmosphere. This is supposed to be an arcade game. The sheen of the presentation should blind you. The roar of the crowd should deafen you. You should be on your knees vomiting with excitement within seconds, shielding your eyes to protect yourself from the clouds of powered razzle-dazzle being fired in your direction from the oversized cartoon blunderbuss marked 'FUN'. You want to be shouted at, to be violently shaken, to be left dizzied and mildly confused. That's how arcade games work – they pump out endless waves of smoke and clatter to distract you to such a degree that you never notice that the actual gameplay is thinner than sandwich ham. And the bottom line is, *NBA Jam '04* can't rouse itself to provide anything like the level of excitement required to mask over its piddling shallowness. It feels stilted and tired, as though the *NBA Jam* players secretly wish Acclaim would just let them retire to the land of park benches and tinned sweets with some dignity. Instead, they've been levered out from the crevices of their armchairs and thrown up against *NBA Street Vol 2*, a game with infinite levels of imagination and life.



SHOVE OFF There's not much fun to be found here.

A comparison between the two soon reveals *NBA Jam '04* to be a dinosaur. An obscure one that didn't make the final cut of *Jurassic Park* because it walked too slowly and kept falling asleep between takes. It's a turtle-skinned grandad in a Gola tracksuit and Pony hi-tops struggling to keep up with athletes half a century his junior, who kick its arse and laugh every time it keels over to cough up another dollop of brown, treacle-like phlegm.

The most immediate difference between the previous generation of *Jam* and this one is that it's now three-on-three and not two-on-two. This isn't a good thing. The only reason the original game was worth playing at all was because it had the cajones to strip the sport of basketball down to its underwear, brazenly removing layers and layers of needless rules and superfluous players. An increase in the number of men on each team results in slower play and a more cluttered court, neither of which endear us to this 2004 update. If we're honest, the only pure nugget of fun we can sniff out is provided by the commentator, who frequently brightens up the play by unknowingly uttering obscene passages of dialogue. "He's going to have to loosen his belt – he just ate a whole lot of wood," made us laugh every time we heard it, as did, "He delivers the facial." The outright winner has to be the classic, "He's just eaten more wood than a beaver on Thanksgiving," which, if you take 'wood' to mean 'erection' and 'beaver' to mean 'fanny', could even be a triple-entendre. We're not sure if that's technically possible.

A disappointment then. Though not a complete disaster – wrap the cord of your multitap around its neck and you and your mates might manage to throttle a couple of droplets of enjoyment from it – the promised headrush dissipates early on and leaves you with a dull, aching thud.

/ JON BROWN

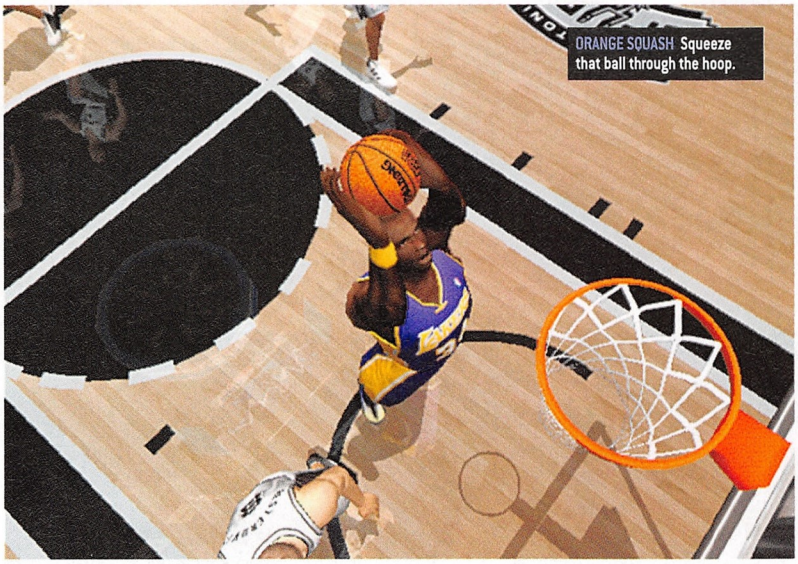
PSW VERDICT

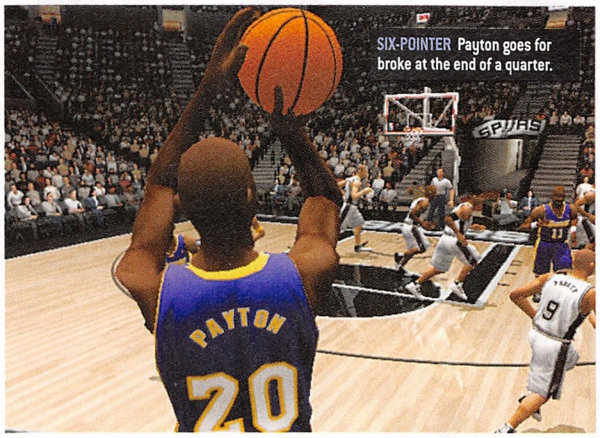
> UPPERS	> DOWNERS
> Easy to pick up	> Not loud or fast enough
> Dunks look OK	> Controls are woolly
> Solid selection of teams	> Definite lack of tricks
> Good four-player game	> Extremely repetitive

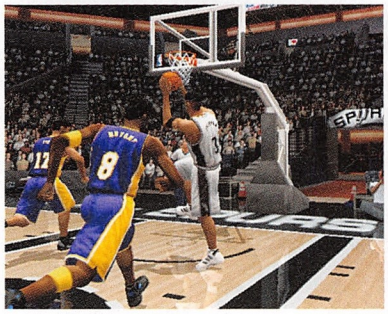
GRAPHICS	> Should've been smoother and bigger	5
SOUNDS	> Should've been louder and hip-hoppier	7
GAMEPLAY	> Should've been quicker and deeper	5

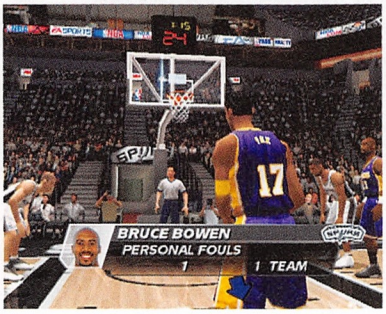
OVERALL SCORE
NBA Jam's comeback game ends in tears, shoving and failure. More fun than a pornography famine, less fun than sliding over a freshly washed kitchen floor in football socks.

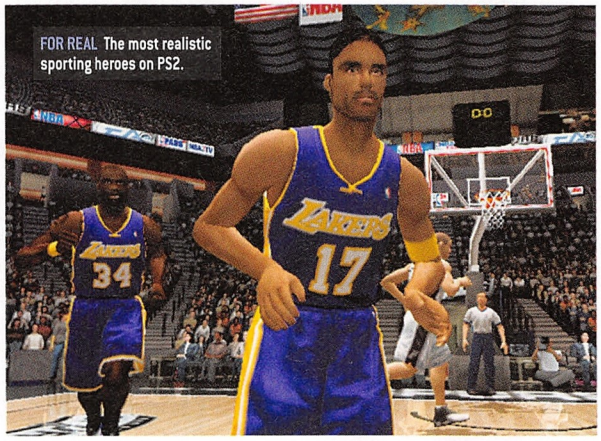
6


ORANGE SQUASH Squeeze that ball through the hoop.


SIX-POINTER Payton goes for broke at the end of a quarter.






FOR REAL The most realistic sporting heroes on PS2.

NBA LIVE 2004

ELECTRONIC ARTS, THE PLAYERS THAT DO THIS SHIT FROM THE HEART, USE COMEDY RAPPING FROM THE VERY START.

> TYPE	BASKETBALL
> PLAYERS	1-4
> OUT	NOW
> PUBLISHER	EA
> PRICE	$99.95
> DEVELOPER	EA
> ONLINE	NO

IN THE RELENTLESS EA SPORTS PRODUCTION line, no sport remains outside of the realms of possibility. Every sport is eventually identified, evaluated for popularity and put on a game disc. Buying an EA game based on your favourite sport is a hit and miss affair, however. Choosing a good EA Sports title is similar to attending a speed dating session while blindfolded, hoping to find a beauty but running a very real risk that you'll end up with a spoon-faced beast.

Tiger Woods and *Madden NFL* are the lookers, while *FIFA* and *Rugby* seriously let the side down, stumbling from the EA conveyor belt looking like dizzy, inbred mutants. Praise the Lord, then, that basketball has been recreated in a suitably alluring manner by EA.


THE CLUTCH 11 shocks 17 by grabbing a rival's ass. Nasty.

NBA Live 2004 is the most accurate basketball game on PlayStation2 in terms of stats, teams, players and stadia. Whether you support a regular team such as the Chicago Bulls or want to build a team of fresh-faced college bean poles, *NBA Live 2004* has more players than any rival title. Rather than focus on the arcade-style shoot outs of the *NBA Street* series, *NBA Live 2004* is a realistic conversion of the sport. You can pick a official team and play a full season, build and manage a fantasy team or even head back in time and pick a classic line-up in the Dynasty mode.

EA has done a superb job of recreating the big match atmosphere of each game. Crowds whoop, commentators bellow and real players introduce the game via video clips, which catch them off court during real life games. Naturally, EA takes the authentic feeling a tad too far by overloading *NBA Live 2004* with hip hop tracks, amusingly including a couple of rap compositions that name check EA Sports and *NBA Live 2004*. Needless to say, these tracks sound like your mum rapping about house cleaning.

In terms of gameplay, the pace is as fast as you would expect and selecting individual players is fluid and hassle free. The *FIFA*-style passing system, which highlights potential receivers with button icons, is used to good effect and there are plenty of rewarding tricks to be mastered. The replay option is simply stunning and even beats *FIFA* in terms of sheer player detail. Pause the game and you can zoom around your ballers frozen in mid-air, observing the whites of their eyes or attempting to look up their shorts. While we were half expecting to find motion-captured genitalia, all that we found was darkness. We assume this isn't EA skimping on detail, rather a "no nudity" clause in the contract of each player.

If you're seriously into basketball, *NBA Live 2004* is by far the most playable and authentic simulation available. If, on the other hand, you only pretend to be down with the ultra-bling lifestyle of the sport and can't name more than two teams, we'd recommend you take a look at the infinitely more accessible *NBA Street Vol.2*. And dude, we promise we won't tell anyone.

/ RICHARD MELVILLE

PSW VERDICT

> UPPERS	> DOWNERS
> All the teams, all the players	> Bad in-house rap tracks
> Players look almost real	> New controls need practice
> Stacks of game modes	> No ghettofab street action
> Footage of real ballers	> No cheerleaders. Boo

GRAPHICS	> Look at the nose hair!	9
SOUNDS	> Great commentary and "novel" hip hop	7
GAMEPLAY	> Simple controls and fun tricks	8

OVERALL SCORE 8

The most authentic and exciting basketball game on PS2. EA doesn't compromise gameplay for glitz this time around. *NBA Live 2004* delivers both. We just wish *FIFA* was this good.



I'VE GOT THE POWER Jacko does the *Thriller* dance.



RED OR DEAD? A horned demon frog eats zombies.



SHOPPING FRENZY Malls act as zombie hideouts.

HUNTER: THE RECKONING WAYWARD

AN ULTRA-VIOLENT ZOMBIE SLASHER WITH AN INSATIABLE THIRST FOR THE RED STUFF AND A DISAPPOINTINGLY HOLLOW CORE. AS FOR THE NAME, JUST DON'T ASK.

> TYPE	ACTION
> PLAYERS	1-2
> OUT	NOVEMBER
> PUBLISHER	VIVENDI
> PRICE	$99.95
> DEVELOPER	WHITE WOLF STUDIOS
> ONLINE	NO

THERE WAS A TIME WHEN YOU COULD SPOT A vampire in a crowded room by the widow's peak, the flowing cape and the bleeding virgin leaking life-giving claret over the carpet. Not these days. If telly and cinema are to be believed (and we know of no higher authority) they wear more black leather than Suzi Quattro, listen to Marilyn Manson and wear curiously high-soled shoes. And so do the people who hunt 'em down. *Hunter: The Reckoning Wayward* tells us so.

If you've ever played the role-playing games *Vampire: The Masquerade* or *Werewolf: The Apocalypse* (no, us neither. Too busy playing video games) you'll recognise lots here. The Hunters are a group of vaguely religious-nutter types who spend their time eliminating all manner of supernatural evil. Sounds as good an excuse for a heavy-heavy undead killing title as we need, then. In fact, vampires themselves aren't much in evidence here. It's mostly about the zombies, or rots as they're inexplicably known in the *Hunter* world. And the number of shambling, moaning rots coming after you is impressive – it means they aren't just a pack. Stop decimating them for a few seconds and soon they're a fully fledged horde; a scabby army that would get Michael Jackson calling his choreographer. Thankfully your standard attack knocks out a rot in a hit or two, entertainingly cutting them in two, severing their heads or ripping them open. By then, there's another six coming at you in that deceptively fast waddle zombies seem to have got down perfectly.



READY TO RUMBLE The urban barbarian kills a zombie every 0.006 seconds, creating a mess.

The top-down view may confuse the unwary – all you see is the top of your player's noggin and the reaching arms of the assorted dead folk coming after you. It's like watching all the action from stilts. The benefit from the viewpoint is you're much more in control of what happens behind you. Zombie sneaking up on you? Not for long. Thanks to some natty controls, you can run in any direction no matter which way you're firing. Meaning there's plenty of room for *Max Payne*-style rolls, strafes and stylish executions. If you squint, you can just make 'em out. An "edge" move gives you a special attack or power that adds some natty effects and gives you a chance to save the day in the name of tats, beards and dreadlocks, we suppose.

Downsides? There're a few too many missions that depend on running round like a nutter looking for a single item in a great big map and taking it back. If we wanted to be couriers we'd have dyed our hair purple, pierced our tongues and changed our name to Miguel, thanks. The fighting gets undeniably samey after a while, because this isn't the deepest game in the world. But then it's not meant to be. At its dark and hollow core, *Hunter* is a *Gauntlet* clone. What's amazing is just how little this matters. We reckon it's a lot more fun this way, and fans of *Baldur's Gate: Dark Alliance* will recognise the surprising charm of a high-up camera. The only thing lacking is what made *Gauntlet* the most fun: a four-player mode enabling you to bash undead trash with three friends. On the other hand, if you could play *Hunter* with three friends you'd have enough for an ultra destructive nu-metal band anyway. Go rock!

/ JOFF BROWN

PSW VERDICT

> UPPERS	> DOWNERS
> Detailed, atmospheric looks	> No four-player mode
> Excellent fighting	> Action gets repetitive
> Mad bosses	> A leetle beet seelly
> Fancy spells	> Unremittingly dark

GRAPHICS	> Top-down, but surprisingly in-depth	8
SOUNDS	> Goth groans annoy, but effects are meaty	7
GAMEPLAY	> Repetitive, but killing ghouls is still a blast	7

OVERALL SCORE 7

Proof that a lot of polish whipped up with some fairly simple gameplay and a dash of gothic style can create a pretty nice title. Our reckoning? Nice one *Hunter*.









WORMS 3D

YOU KNOW HOW *3D TETRIS* AND *3D LEMMINGS* AND *DRAGON'S LAIR 3D* DIDN'T WORK? WELLLL...

SEE IT ON THE DVD

> TYPE	STRATEGY
> PLAYERS	1-4
> OUT	NOVEMBER
> PUBLISHER	SEGA
> PRICE	$99.95
> DEVELOPER	TEAM 17
> ONLINE	NO

IGNORE THE CUTESY-SICK-MAKING GRAPHICS. *Worms 3D* isn't a platform game. It's not even a smooth, exhilarating ride like most PlayStation2 titles are these days. It's not meant to be. Instead, it's an arena for a very skilled and exacting turn-based multiplayer battle that, potentially, could have shat on the *Fire Warriors* and *TimeSplitters2*s of this world from a great height. You have access to dozens of weapons, special attacks and ways to travel. You then have a set number of seconds to move one of your worms and try to take one shot at the opposition's slimy ones. Then it's their turn to attempt to take you out – and so on.

If you ever played one of the original 2D *Worms* games, this will all sound very familiar. Hell, even the weapons, voices and tactics are just as you remember them. What's different is that now it's played out on a properly 3D destructible landscape, which makes everything more difficult by a factor of, well, three. Judging distances for aiming is now harder, as the wind blows side to side as well as forwards and backwards. The levels look pretty from a distance, and babyishly basic up close. Huge, tangled structures separate you and your enemies, but the game camera is hopelessly incompetent at capturing the action. You have the choice of a close-up third-person view, or a bird's eye view that can't be zoomed in. The result? You can't fire the complex (default) bazooka weapon properly unless you have either a) a degree in ballistics, or b) steadier hands than the Statue of Liberty.

There's a single-player game in here too, which is quite deep and challenging, but it's ever so slightly mission-based and only serves to highlight *Worms 3D's* control problems further still. Without another human around to balance out your incompetence, things can get hairy. One wrong button press and you've messed things up completely. Your worms inch along merrily, then drop into the water you couldn't see coming because of the camera position. No sooner have you recovered from that catastrophe than your worms have jumped into oblivion because you double tapped the button when you didn't mean to. You're not so much controlling your characters as you are issuing orders.

Even when you get into it, it's hard to really like *Worms 3D*. So many of the elements that used to make us laugh have ended up becoming very annoying in the intervening years. Those helium voices? There are now loads of different voice groups, even more than before, but it's all still made up of sub-Monty Python humour and early 90s TV references. Although each worm has a different name, no efforts been made to change their generically wormy appearance. Fine for three pixels on your mate's old Commodore Amiga, not so fine when you're dealing with a battlefield of ten identical friends and foes.

It's obvious that developer Team 17 had a lot of fun making this, but it's really only a 3D update of an old game rather than a proper re-invention. Oldsters might love it – then again, they might rebel and want the original like babies deprived of their ickle dummy. So we're giving it a somewhat dismissive five out of ten. Because you can't please all of the people all of the time.

/ JOFF BROWN

PSW VERDICT

> UPPERS	> DOWNERS
> It's *Worms*! You know?	> 3D means 3 times tougher
> All those old weapons	> Bewildering to newbies
> Still engrossing	> Cameras fairly stink
> Multiplayer's neato	> STOP THE VOICES. NOW

GRAPHICS	> Smooth but only because they're basic	5
SOUNDS	> Oh, hahaha, they talk like pirates	4
GAMEPLAY	> Hard at first. Then still hard.	6

OVERALL SCORE 5
We predict that nobody can be bothered to spend the time on this well-intentioned but pretty much futile update. We won't be losing much sleep over this.















SEE IT ON THE DVD

TIME CRISIS 3

PISTOLS AT TEN PACES, GRENADE LAUNCHERS AT FIFTEEN METRES AND SHOTGUNS AT POINT BLANK RANGE. WELCOME TO THE WONDERFUL WORLD OF *TIME CRISIS*.

> TYPE	SHOOTING
> PLAYERS	1-2
> OUT	OCTOBER
> PUBLISHER	SONY
> PRICE	$99.95
> DEVELOPER	NAMCO
> ONLINE	NO

GUNS EH? HORRIBLE THINGS IN PRINCIPLE, but there's something about them that makes even the most pacifistic of us love 'em anyway. We mean, come on. Who hasn't gone to the power-tool department of their local DIY store, picked up the biggest electric drill on display and then pretended it was some kind of souped-up AK-47? And isn't "Uzi 9mm" the sexiest phrase (after "Miss Gellar's waiting in the bedroom for you sir") ever? Which is why it's almost impossible not to love the *Time Crisis* games. And take it from us, *Time Crisis 3* is fan-fricking-tastic. It's not just a very good lightgun game; it's just about the best lightgun game ever released on any console, period.



HAVING A BLAST Try not to stand in the way of bullets. Duh.

And the catch is...? Well it is a lightgun game, right, which means it's kind of on the shallow side. But put your gaming class snobbery aside for a minute and *Time Crisis 3* really is the purest slice of adrenalin-charged gaming we've seen in ages. If you've played the arcade version of *Time Crisis 3*, or any of the *Time Crisis* games for that matter, you'll know what to expect. This is *Time Crisis* with all the stops pulled out. There's a beach landing full of armed guards arriving by parachute, a close-quarters gun fight through a burning library (complete with some quality fire effects), a frenzied escape from a sinking ship, a roof-top battle across a Mediterranean village and we've not even mentioned the obligatory train-based sequence.

And then there's the revolutionary "all-new" bit; the multiple weapon angle that allows you to switch between pistol, machinegun, shotgun and grenade launcher during moments when you're not actively putting the bad guys down. OK, so it doesn't change the flow of the gameplay all that much, but it does add a smidgen of strategy, forcing you to pick the most appropriate weapon for the task in hand. As endlessly fun as it all is though – and rarely have we had a game in the office garner so much attention – *Time Crisis 3* is still an arcade game at heart and, as such, not overly long. Half an hour is all it'll take for an experienced player to get from start to finish. That said, there's the two-player mode that can be played split screen or, more suitably, with two PS2s linked up, as well as tweaking options that allow you to alter the game each time you play. There's even a PS2 exclusive Rescue mode that casts you as a new female character. Lovely.

So, despite the fact that it's short, repetitive and you'll need to fork out for two machines, two tellies, two copies of the game, two lightguns and a friend to get the most out of it, *Time Crisis 3* is a no arguments, dyed-in-the-wool eight out of ten game. Because it's just that good.

/ MARK ROBINS

PSW VERDICT

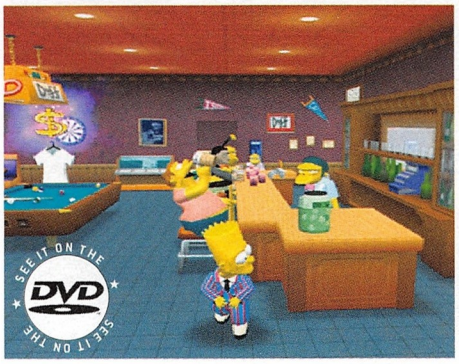
> UPPERS	> DOWNERS
> Crack cocaine addictive	> Short
> Looks and sounds great	> Repetitive
> Brilliant level design	> One-dimensional
> Great PS2 extras	> But so is Pammy Anderson

GRAPHICS	> Spot-on arcade conversion	8
SOUNDS	> Great soundtrack, good gun blasts	8
GAMEPLAY	> You'll grin like a cheshire cat on pills	9

OVERALL SCORE Admittedly short and shallow, but packed with extras and the sort of addictive gameplay that only the amusement arcade can bring. You can't fail to love this inspired piece of programming. **8**

MINI REVIEWS

STILL LOOKING FOR THAT PERFECT PURCHASE TO MAKE YOUR MONTH? SIX MORE GAMES YOU MIGHT LIKE TO CONSIDER...



THE SIMPSONS HIT AND RUN

HOMER BECOMES TOMMY VERCETTI AND HAVOC HITS SPRINGFIELD.

> TYPE	DRIVING
> PLAYERS	1
> OUT	NOVEMBER
> PUBLISHER	VIVENDI
> PRICE	$99.95
> DEVELOPER	HIGH VOLTAGE
> ONLINE	NO

THE TEMPLATE FOR PREVIOUS SIMPSONS GAMES HAS been simple. The developers find a popular game that the kids like, copy it and insert the most popular animated family in the world. Hence, *Simpsons Road Rage* aped *Crazy Taxi*, while *Simpsons Skateboarding* was a blatant *Tony Hawk's* rip off. Predictably, both were rubbish.

The next game to be replicated Simpons-style is *GTA Vice City*. This means Homer drives a pink Cadillac and causes mayhem by stealing school buses, running over innocent pedestrians and popping to the Kwik-E-Mart for a large tub of ice cream. You can steal cars and break things, but the line is drawn when it comes to killing Springfield residents. Citizens bounce off the bonnet of speeding cars rather than ending up in the gutter, yellow limbs twitching like bizarre alien roadkill.

The Simpsons Hit and Run is based around humour rather than violence, so you won't be bumping uglies with hookers in a Duff beer van or murdering Ned Flanders in his back yard. On the bright side, there are appearances from almost every Simpsons character in existence, including Groundskeeper Willie, Principle Skinner, Comic Book Guy and Cletus. It's possible to recognise the gaudy landmarks of Bart's hometown instantly and you'd have to be a very humourless person indeed not to smirk at the sight of Homer heading to Springfield High with Lisa's missing lunch wearing nothing but a pair of Y-Fronts.

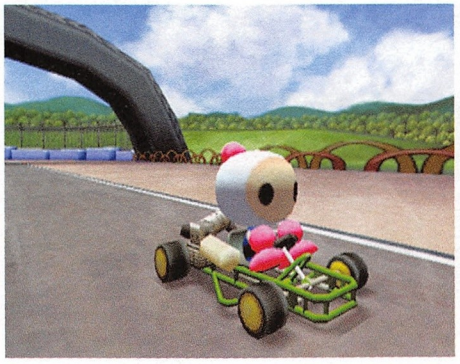
Despite boring training levels, *The Simpsons Hit and Run* is a genuinely amusing game. To many, this will never amount to anything more than just another average *GTA Vice City* clone, but fans of show will love it.

/ JONATHAN TODD

PSW VERDICT

OVERALL SCORE
Easily the best *Simpsons* game so far, but that's hardly a great achievement. You should only really give this consideration if you're a *huuuge* fan of the TV series.

6



BOMBERMAN KART

THEY CALL HIM MR BOOMBASTIC BUT HIS KART GAME ISN'T FANTASTIC.

> TYPE	RACER
> PLAYERS	1-4
> OUT	NOW
> PUBLISHER	KONAMI
> PRICE	$99.95
> DEVELOPER	HUDSON
> ONLINE	NO

EVER SINCE MARIO JUMPED INTO A KART, EVERY fluffy video game character wants in. But titles such as *Shrek* and *Crash Bandicoot* really ought to stay in the pits and never clutter the PS2 freeway which is jammed with brilliant realistic racers like *Gran Turismo* and *Colin McRae*.

There's an emphasis on four-player fun in *Bomberman Kart* with a variety of familiar rockets, bombs and speed ups. It's all been done before, but not quite as badly as in this game. From the menu screen, you learn that the game was released in Japan during 2001 which doesn't bode well. We used to love *Bomberman* in his original multiplayer maze-based form, but *Bomberman Kart* is truly terrible. Quite how it's managed to surface in Oz, we don't know. Perhaps the Sony quality control department took a holiday and Konami managed to sneak *Bomberman Kart* under the radar.

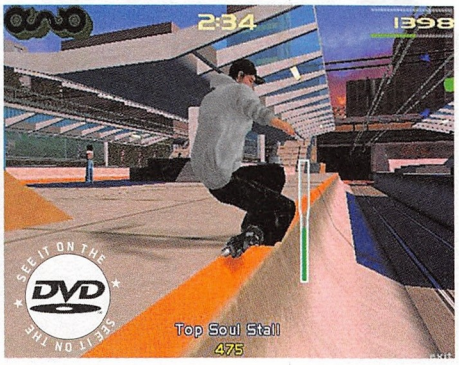
Roadside objects are so basic, it's not entirely stupid to think that you are playing a PSone game. The whole office gathered and chuckled at the sight of bizarre dolphins leaping across a track and into a crowd of large-headed spectators. Not much in the land of *Bomberman* makes any sense and the mixture of shoddy graphics and gaudy colours just confuses things further. But luckily, the game gets better because, buried deep within the, er, title screen is a option to play the highly entertaining original *Bomberman* game from 1988. The concept is simple: walk around a maze, drop timed bombs and kill everyone. It's genius and accounts for 80% of the score you see below. Just don't play the karting bit.

/ RICHARD MELVILLE

PSW VERDICT

OVERALL SCORE
An unashamedly rubbish attempt to turn a quality gaming legend into a karting legend. Bomberman should have never found the way out of his maze.

5



ROLLING

HEY DUDE, HAS THIS GOT ANYTHING TO DO WITH FRED DURST?

> TYPE	IN-LINE SKATING
> PLAYERS	1-2
> OUT	NOW
> PUBLISHER	SCI
> PRICE	$99.95
> DEVELOPER	RAGE
> ONLINE	NO

NO MATTER WHAT YOUR GAMING PREFERENCE, YOU can't deny that the *Tony Hawk* series is one of the best extreme sports experiences to be had on PlayStation2. Whether you bemoan the baggy Limp Bizkit skater midgets who terrorise Tesco car parks or happen to be one of them, video game skating simply rocks. Or at least it did before *Rolling* limped into view.

Almost every aspect of *Rolling* has been culled directly from the *Tony Hawk* series, from the skate park editor to the tricks, the challenges and the options to customise your skater. In fact, the only thing that's missing is the skateboard, which is where the problems start. Because *Rolling* is actually based on inline skating as opposed to the infinitely more popular/cooler/appealing discipline favoured by Tony Hawk and his purple-kneed friends.

Not only is inline skating terribly uncool, it's also a bitch to simulate, as *Rolling* demonstrates through its thorough bastardisation of the *Tony Hawk 4* control interface. It's difficult to turn at speed and, because the environments are small and cluttered, there are more than a few embarrassing moments when you run headlong into a wall, making *Rolling* feel like a special (and we mean special as in 'special bus') skate edition of *Jackass*. It's also tricky to predict exactly where your skater is going to land after a huge leap, leading to more yet more needless blood spillage and frustration. In a final bid to make rollerskates seem cool, *Rolling* includes a huge amount of licensed gear and a soundtrack featuring everything from The Hives to Public Enemy. Neither of whom has ever worn rollerskates. Totally clueless.

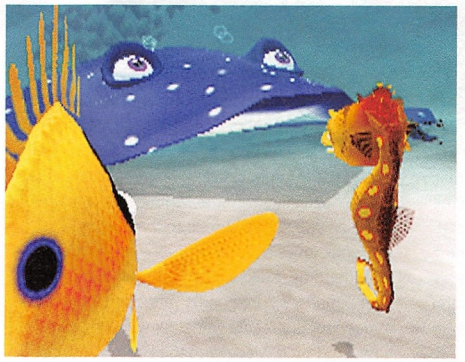
/ JOFF BROWN

PSW VERDICT

OVERALL SCORE
Flawed controls spoil this below average *Tony Hawk* clone. Grubby visuals and a complete lack of originality don't really help either. Wait for *Tony Hawks' Underground*.

4

PLATINUM



FINDING NEMO

"CLAMS ARE STUPID," SAYS THE STAR OF FINDING NEMO. WE AGREE.

> TYPE	ACTION
> PLAYERS	1
> OUT	NOW
> PUBLISHER	THQ
> PRICE	$99.95
> DEVELOPER	TRAVELLER'S TALES
> ONLINE	NO

ALL CHILDREN UNDER THE AGE OF TEN ARE IMBECILES. You only need scan their drawings to realise that. Look at mummy's hands. They're completely rubbish. Just two circles with four (not even five) spikes sticking out of them. And how is anyone supposed to get into that house? The front door is smaller than the chimney pot, which is floating three inches above the roof, by the way. So if you're thinking of buying your son/daughter/younger brother/sister a PS2 game this month and like the look of *Finding Nemo*, bear in mind that you'll most probably be required to play it yourself at some stage. Because, as much as we hate to admit it, in certain places we actually found it a fairly tricky.

If little Timmy does tug on your trouser leg to ask you for help and you can't get past the third level, just mumble something about the lack of an option to invert the Y-axis and hand the joypad back huffily. For not only is this a perfectly valid excuse (if there is a dead goldfish floating mouth agape at the surface of Nemo's glass bowl, it's the one named "Control Interface"), it'll also confuse the child, therefore reasserting the fact that you're more intelligent. Which you'll need to do for the sake of your ego after failing a game designed to occupy the tiny minds of idiots who struggle to match farm animals with the noises they make. No wonder they're still at school.

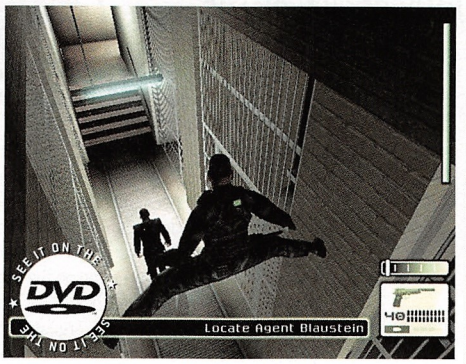
A decent-sized package of fun then. It looks as pretty and as busy as you'd expect it to; the levels are sweet and charming. Which it that rarest of things: a movie tie-in aimed squarely at kids that doesn't stink worse than a lumberjack's toilet brush.

/ JON BROWN

PSW VERDICT

OVERALL SCORE 7

Be warned: if your kids are really stupid, go with something a little easier. Otherwise, *Finding Nemo* is as likable as we'd imagine the movie is. We haven't seen it.



SPLINTER CELL

PSW MUST BUY

THAT FAMOUS XBOX EXCLUSIVE. ON PS2. FOR A SECOND TIME.

> TYPE	ACTION ADVENTURE
> PLAYERS	1
> OUT	NOW
> PUBLISHER	UBI SOFT
> PRICE	$49.95
> DEVELOPER	UBI SOFT
> ONLINE	NO

WHAT A GRAND TIME OF IT SUPER STEALTH HERO SAM Fisher has had in the past year. First of all, his agent secures a big-money transfer from Xbox over to the PS2 so he can become a proper celebrity rather than just a cult figure forever on the fringes of the A-list ("Sam who? Sorry mate. Your name's not on the list. You're not coming in") and then, as if by magic, he becomes a *PSW* cover star and never looks back. Jennifer Lopez can only dream of such stardom. To cement his title as the next best stealth agent after Solid Snake, Sam Fisher's *Splinter Cell* is to be released as part of the cheapo Platinum range.

For those of you who missed it first time around, *Splinter Cell* is based on traditional hide-and-sneak principles. There's a massive amount of secret gadgets to help you kill people in complete silence, including a wire-based optical camera which can be passed underneath closed doors to show who is in the room or, indeed, who is in the toilet cubicle next to you. Another camera device is the a sticky cam, which can be placed anywhere within a level to transmit images back to you. OK, so the gadgets might not sound that exciting, but when faced with a gang of trained killers, you'll get the biggest feeling of satisfaction. Likewise, Sam's own abilities are pretty cool. This man can do the splits in mid-air for Christ's sake!

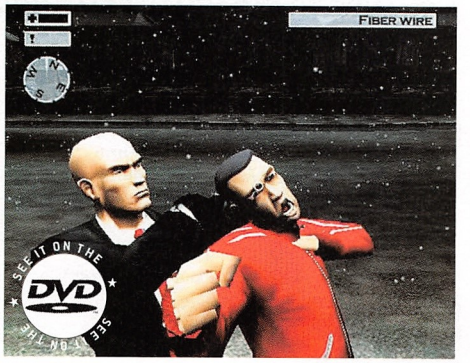
Splinter Cell is designed for people who want a military-style action game without all the strategic hang ups of a team-based tactical shooter. Hence you get best of both worlds - the chance to shoot people in the back of the head *and* the opportunity to swing around like Spider-man in a pole dancing club. Essential.

/ JONATHAN TODD

PSW VERDICT

OVERALL SCORE 9

Metal Gear Solid 2 is better, but *Splinter Cell* is a classic stealth game, which brings enough new tricks to the table to make it an essential purchase.



HITMAN 2

HE LOST HIS LIFE TO CRIME AND HIS HAIR TO OLD AGE. POOR BUGGER.

> TYPE	ACTION ADVENTURE
> PLAYERS	1
> OUT	NOW
> PUBLISHER	EIDOS
> PRICE	$49.95
> DEVELOPER	IO
> ONLINE	NO

THE LIFE OF A HITMAN IS OFTEN GLAMORISED WHEN, in truth, it's probably a miserable, dangerous and unrewarding career. *Hitman 2* isn't any of the above, offering sniping fans a chance to get their kicks by indulging in their most illegal fantasies. Despite looking like a bouncer from a meat-market nightclub in the provinces, the balding, genetically-enhanced hitman you play is as hard as nails. He doesn't even have a name, choosing to adopt the mysterious moniker Codename 47.

Each level gives you a dossier which, predictably, includes holiday snaps of the evil mafia don that you need to whack. Killing innocent people is frowned upon while silently disabling people via chloroform, darts and stun guns is praised in the caring world of *Hitman 2*. When a final target is reached, it's time to kill using proper firepower rather than trying to strangle a lardy kinpin with your piano wire. A choice of assault rifles, grenades and times bombs are available for the final kill of each mission.

During the first few attempts you'll accidentally shoot an innocent, make a noise or be spotted by the enemy and be shot instantly. Rather than certain death, being caught presents you with a number of options: run, starting shooting or grab a disguise. As if killing your target without leaving a trace wasn't challenge enough, later levels feature a rival killer sent, Terminator-style, to kill you. Rather than feeling safe while sitting in a sniping hideout, there's always the feeling that someone is out to get you. Suffice to say, if you've ever spent an balmy evening in *Vice City* sniping innocent motorists as they pass, cackling with glee as their heads explode, *Hitman 2* is the game for you.

/ JON BROWN

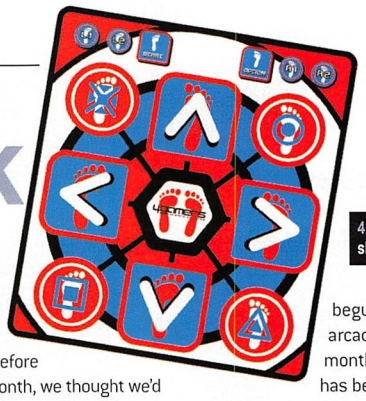
PSW VERDICT

OVERALL SCORE 8

A original concept made even better by strategy elements that provide a welcome break from no-brainer blasters. A thrifty purchase for wannabe snipers.

DANCER IN THE QUARK

A CHANCE TO FABRICATE SOME UNFUNNY OFFICE SNAPS



4GAMERS Note the shoulder buttons.

NOT ONLY DO WE LIKE THE EYETOY HERE AT PSW, we're not afraid to admit it. Sure, it's only really exciting in little bursts, but by gee does it make us wee! For the vain, it is their calling, while for men desperately seeking approval from their girlfriends for their favourite hobby its existence is invaluable. It's not so much a game as a novelty, and while the non-gamer majority in society might claim every game is a novelty, godammit we know better. With the arrival of *Eyetoy: Groove*, the dance-based second Eyetoy game disc due out next month, we're faced with a curious area of competition. It's camera versus dance mat in the battle of the groove. And before we take on *Groove* next month, we thought we'd get you up to speed on the state of the dance mat.



THE CURE We're dancing to Lovecats.

The dance mat phenomenon, originating in the arcade, is not hard to explain. You stand on a mat marked with arrows. Music plays, usually of the ultra-cheese variety. You stomp on the arrows as they appear on screen, and thus a funny, stampy and very camp dance is made. Arguably there hasn't been such a simple, addictive concept since *Tetris*, and it's just as appealing to people of all ages. You'd have to be some kind of fun-hating ogre not to at least try it out – and when you try it, there's a danger you'll be hooked, at least for a moment. The only weird thing about the concept is why there aren't already about ten different versions of the game, all catering to different music types. Although the thought of *Line-Dancing Stage: Hoe-down Mix* gives us the creeps.

While the PS One enjoyed plenty of dance games in its lifespan, only recently has the PS2 begun to boogey down, George St. arcade style. For the last couple of months *Dancing Stage Megamix* has been available for $109.95 with a free mat. A fair package, for sure. While less than a dozen licensed tracks limits its pick up and play appeal, it's similar to the Eyetoy – everyone loves it. Sure, everyone might only love it for the time it takes a kettle to boil, but in that brief period it's pure genius (although almost too athletic for our feeble gamer joints). While we hate to admit it, along with the Eyetoy, it's the only game we've been able to play with a girl and still score later that night. For some reason *Pro Evo* just doesn't have the same effect.



BEER The perfect ad for sobriety. Tossers.

Until *Dancing Stage Fever* (Atari's followup to *Megamix*) comes out in March next year, *Megamix* is more or less your only option, unless you want to pick up a PS One dance game on the cheap. If you want to dance together with someone, you'll need to take some ballroom dancing classes. Boom tish. Or, you could just invest in a second dance mat. These might be difficult to source, but can be picked for around $30-$40. We've been testing the 4Gamers one recently (retailing for $29.95) and it does the job quite well. It's a little smaller than the one you get free with *Dancing Stage*, but has one crucial advantage: the presence of trigger buttons on the mat. Pointless? Mostly yes, considering dancing games don't ever use the trigger buttons. However, chuck in *Pro Evo 3*, grow two legs, and you're in a world of wonder (or perhaps a crumpled mess). Ok, maybe *PES* isn't the best example, but games like *Amplitude* work quite well with the dancing mat, even if they weren't designed with the mat specifically in mind.

Next to *Eyetoy: Groove*, dancing mats offer a much more responsive, generally fun experience, even if it means sacrificing the chance to look at ourselves while we prove we are chumps of the dance floor. Might just be worth a look, even if the better you get, the sadder you appear to ex-friends.

ARISE, SIR MULTITAP

LAG-FREE, FULL VOICE-ENABLED MULTIPLAYER

MOST PEOPLE THINK THAT THE FIRST THING THAT you should purchase with a PlayStation 2 is a memory card. A great suggestion – it's an essential acquisition. After all, you need to save your game's progress. But if, in some horrible world where a tyrannical government introduced a 'one peripheral' policy, *PSW* would walk right by the memory card shelf, straight to the domain of multitap! Of course, such a policy would exclude controllers. We'd be in quite a fix with a multitap and no controllers. Woop! Actually though, without PS2-wielding friends, you might struggle to get gather enough Dual Shocks, which might require some more cash. Anyway. Our point is that our best experiences with a PS2 have been alongside four friends (...playing...with the multitap). Co-operative Master League in *Pro Evo*? It's swarm-tastic! And now with *Pro Evo 3*'s fixed player functionality, a whole new Holy Grail of gaming has arisen: the eight player fixed position co-operative game. Oh yes.



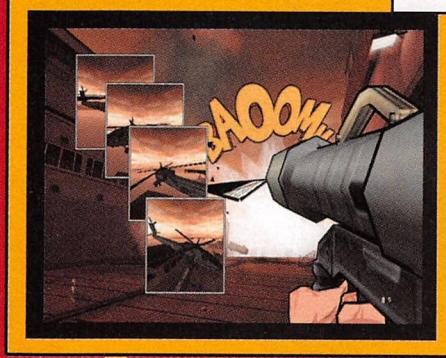
The standard Sony multitap retails for $80 big ones. A little pricey? That's what we thought. And it's also why we're quite taken by the 4Gamers option. If you've hesitated splashing out for a multitap for while now, this could be your opportunity. Online? Bah! Multitaps offer multiplayer gaming with full voice functionality and zero latency. And this particular innovative peripheral also doubles as a vertical stand for your PS2, as well as a rack for half a dozen games. Sure, the cord twisting around can get a little messy, it was never designed with dual-multitap use in mind, and it does feel a little cheap. At $50 though, I'm sure you'll agree those are fairly justifiable sacrifices. If you're the type of games who likes a bash with the mates coming home from the proverbial pub, the multitap is a must-buy.

XIII

they know more about you than you do.



your number is up.





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XBOX PlayStation 2 PC CD-ROM NINTENDO GAMECUBE Ubi Soft ENTERTAINMENT M15+ MEDIUM LEVEL ANIMATED VIOLENCE

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"I thank my lucky stars that I was competing in a women's title match in my hometown. That was my moment, coming out with a maple leaf on my butt. I'm proud to be Canadian and I'm proud of my hometown."

Talkback with

Trish Stratus

She wanted to be a doctor and help old ladies. Now she breaks legs and steals hearts as WWE Diva of The Decade. All rise for Trish Stratus.

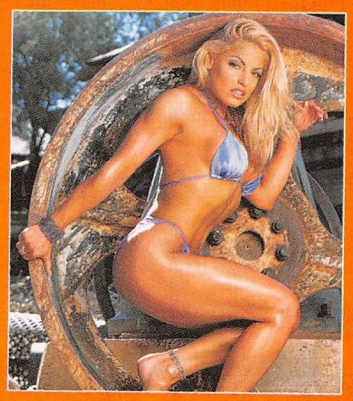
>> We heard that you used to enjoy football when you were younger – what position did you play?
Oh yes, I was a right defence. I was excellent, if I do say so myself.

>> Your earlier aspirations were to become a doctor – is this something you would still like to do later on in life?
Well, the problem is I don't have a time line. I don't know when wrestling's going to be over – the last few years have been a kind of see-as-we-go kind of process. I'm basically going to see where my career takes me. I still have a lot to do with the WWE, so we'll see.

>> What prompted the transition from manager to wrestler?
I knew I was capable of being more physical in the ring. I was already a valet and I wanted to increase my role a little bit more. I really had to do whatever they wanted me to do as a valet, as far as taking bumps. I think it was seeing my ability and my willingness that led them to going "ok". Test and Albert was obviously a big deal in my career, that was when I started out. I didn't really get into the ring that much until that story line. I guess the combination of that feud ended with me and Stephanie McMahon in No Way Out in 2002, which was one of my first pay per view matches. First singles match on PPV, from two people who are certainly not looked at as workers. We had such an awesome story line between us, we were both heels at the time. We had about 12 minutes for my first wrestling match and did a hell of a job.

>> You seem to have a liking for cowboy hats – is there a story behind this?
There is actually. I was backstage and I was told I would be debuting. I needed two distinct outfits as I was going to be scouting both Test and Albert. So I went to the mall and found some cute little outfits and some cowboy boots and, as I was walking through, I saw a long jacket. I knew I wanted to have a distinct look, in the same way as, you know, Undertaker wears this and Kane wears this. I had a pink outfit and by coincidence I saw a pink hat and I thought that would be kind of neat, as it will match. Every week I would wear a different one.

>> What was it like performing in front of your home crowd at Wrestlemania 18 last year?
Oh, it was amazing! I thank my lucky stars that I was competing in a women's title match in my hometown. You know I could have just been a valet, and just watching from the sidelines. But to be at the stage of my career where I am competing and to be at home, where you know the reception is always warm, is tremendous. That was my moment, coming out with the maple leaf on my butt. I'm proud to be Canadian and I'm proud of my hometown.



>> Could you ever see yourself following in Chyna's footsteps and competing in the men's division ?
No. You know there's no need to. Now we have our own division there are lots of fights and many strong competitors, which makes it so much easier when you are out there. Now we're really spending time getting out there and finding women and developing them. Lydia is a good example of that. She's starting out as a valet, her character is being developed, and so when it comes to her fighting people will have made up their mind on whether to support her or not.

>> You were recently named Diva of the Decade – that must be quite an honour?
Well, considering I've only been in the business for three years, it is quite an achievement to get Diva of the Decade. I accepted that award on behalf of all the Divas in the division because it was a big team effort. If there wasn't a women's division, I wouldn't have been able to have that many titles, or fights, or competitors. The Diva franchise has given us the ability to go out there and to do things that make us all unique. A big package makes the Diva nowadays: it's the magazines and the wrestling combined.

>> The word association game – what are your comments on the following wrestlers/Divas?
Jazz: Tough.
Lita: Extreme, can't wait 'til she's back in the ring.
Victoria: Crazy.
Fabulous Moolah: Ground Breaking, opened the doors for what I do today.
Jacqueline: Tough.
Golberg: Impactful.
Vince McMahon: Thank you.

PROFILE

NAME
Trish Stratus

CREDITS
WWE super babe Trish was voted "Diva of The Decade" despite only being part of the WWE for three years. Three times female champion of the year, Trish went from playing hockey in high school to appearing on covers of American muscle mags and has so far avoided higher shelf publications. Go girl!

OTHER STUFF
The Canadian-born bombshell is 27 years old and her real name is Trish Stratigias. And yes, her assets are DD. See them jiggle in *WWE Smackdown! Here Comes The Pain*....

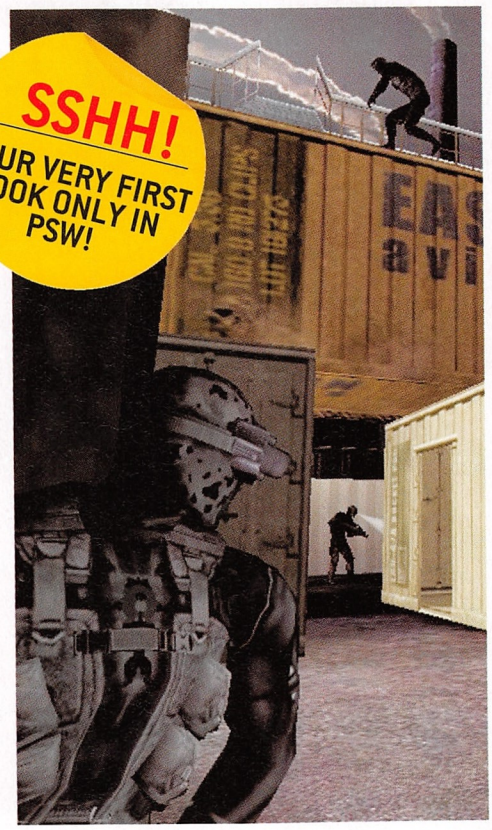
WHAT'S ON YOUR

PSW DVD

WE'VE GONE *SMACKDOWN!* CRAZY FOR THE THIRD MONTH RUNNING, PLUS THERE'S THE EXCLUSIVE EYE CANDY OF *MGS3*, *SPLINTER CELL: PANDORA TOMORROW* AND *GHOST RECON: JUNGLE STORM*. WOWSERS!

COVER GAME





SPLINTER CELL 2

THIS TIME, SAM FISHER'S BROUGHT HIS FRIENDS.

Solid Snake has a new rival in the jungle next year, as Sam Fisher and his trademark night-vision goggles return for yet more triple-A stealth-based action. He's coming out of the slate-grey corridors and into the forest. And guess what? This time he's taking the battle online. For your very first look at *Splinter Cell 2* in action, report immediately to your *PSW* DVD.

PREVIEWS



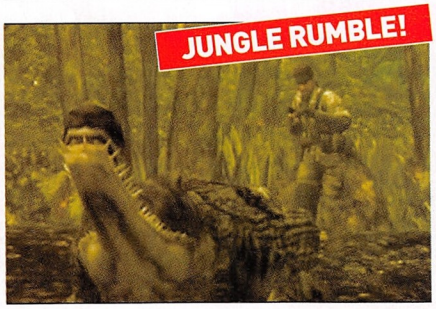
TONY HAWK'S UNDERGROUND

Our Tone has become so streetwise he now wears trousers three sizes too big and calls skaters "sk8rs". See for yourself if you don't believe us.

DISK IN FULL

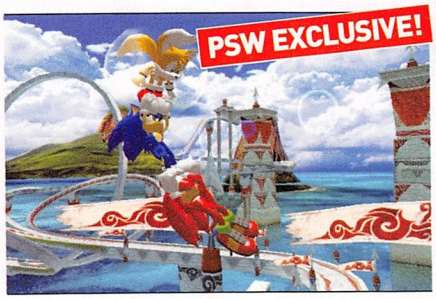
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HALLOWEEN Theme	123166
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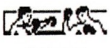
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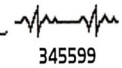
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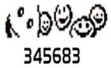

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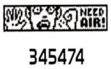

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7. R.KELLY: IGNITION (REMIX) 11176
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9. JUSTIN T: SENORITA 11453
10. SEAN PAUL: GET BUSY 11283
11. 50 CENT: P.I.M.P 11302
12. AMANDA PEREZ: ANGEL 11452
13. DIDO: WHITE FLAG 11455
14. ELVIS: RUBBERNECKIN' 11460
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17. J.WESS PROJECT: BANG THIS 11469
18. MAROON5: HARDER TO BREATHE 11484
19. STACIE O: MORE TO LIFE 11465
20. B.BENASSI: SATISFACTION 11442

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50 Cent: 21 Questions	11282
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Beyonce: Crazy In Love	11357
P!nk: Feel Good Time	11358
Snoop Dogg: Beautiful	11216
Snoop Dogg: Aint No Fun	11461
Busta/Mariah: I Know What U...	11336
Stacie Orrico: Stuck	11223
Christina Aguilera: Fighter	11240
Jewel: Intuition	11386
Thicke: When I Get You Alone	11398
PharrellW/JayZ: Frontin	11462
Justin.T.: Rock Your Body	11286
B2K/PDiddy:BumpBumpBump	10998
J.Lo: I'm Glad	11284
Big Brovaz: Nu Flow	11014
Candice Alley: Falling	11400
United States Of Whatever	11390
T.a.t.U:All The Things She Said	11010
GoodCharlotte: Girls&Boys	11396
Planet Funk: Who Said	11399
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ID: 40008 — SCOOBY DOO theme + Let's eat! & Scooby — SCOOBY
ID: 40097 — Beyonce: Crazy In Love + Crazy In Love — Beyonce
ID: 40085 — Flintstones Theme + I'll make you Bedrock & Flintstones — Bedrock
ID: 40084 — BUFFY Theme + Buffy & Buffy — BUFFY
ID: 40077 — THE SIMPSONS + & — HOMER
ID: 40099 — SEX & THE CITY + Sexy devil & Sex Kitten — SEXY
ID: 40054 — 3 TONES Thunderstruck + Enter Sandman & Sweet Child Of Mine 3 TONES — Rock Pack

Wallabies 20747
ALL BLACKS 20745
BOKS 20746
Fcuk 20133
Funky Monks 20911
Take me drunk, I'm home! 20350
Bitch 21099
Skyline GT-R 20231
Young, Horny & Single!!! 20961
Naughty but Nice 20530
BITCH 21055
Little Miss Dirty 20917
Naughty 20163
Monaro 20820
20463
21003
Beer, Boobies Pizza-mmmm 20320
Vans 20347
Angel 20459
Bite me! 20751
20464
20391
flip 20366
Ford 20143
20684
Sex Kitten 20360
Slut 20352
20121
porn 20129

#1 50CENT: P.I.M.P 11302

RECENT HITS

NELLY: DILEMMA	10846
JENNY FROM THE BLOCK	10881
DJ SAMMY: HEAVEN	10705
CHRISTINA AGUILERA: DIRRTY	10872
JA RULE: MESMERISE	10954
2PAC: CALIFORNIA LOVE	10679
DR DRE: NEXT EPISODE	10696
DELTA: LOST WITHOUT YOU	11163
SHAGGY: HEY SEXY LADY	10869
GOO DCHARLOTTE: ANTHEM	11132
L.PARK: SOMEWHERE I BELONG	11179
BIG YELLOW TAXI	11009
XZIBIT: MULTIPLY	10955

CATCHY TUNES

TEQUILLA	10488
I COULD WALK 500 MILES	10513
SMOOTH CRIMINAL	10436
THE WIGGLES: HOT POTATO	11022
THE LOGICAL SONG	10727
THE KETCHUP SONG	10834
BLINK 182: DAMMIT	10117
SHAGGY: ANGEL	10037
THE WAY YOU MAKE ME FEEL	11111
DIXIE CHICKS: LANDSLIDE	11219
AVRIL LAVIGNE: SK8ER BOI	10845
SALT'N'PEPPA: PUSH IT	10771
LETS TALK ABOUT SEX	10300

EMINEM



WITHOUT ME	10633
8 MILE	10907
STAN	10447
SUPERMAN	10667
LOSE YOURSELF	10912
SING FOR THE MOMENT	10666
CLEANING OUT MY CLOSET	10662
THE REAL SLIM SHADY	10398
HOT!!! BUSINESS	11291

TV THEMES



THE SIMPSONS	10516
SOPRANOS	11221
RUBBER DUCKY	10414
CHARLIES ANGELS	10094
SEX & THE CITY	10424
BENNY HILL	10058
THE SMURFS	10517
THE MUPPETS	10346
THE THUNDERBIRDS	10530
MANAMANA (MUPPETS)	11231
SCOOBY DOO	10420
I DREAM OF JEANNIE	10644
BAKERS DELIGHT AD	10786

ENTER SANDMAN 10154
FADE TO BLACK 11149
UNFORGIVEN 10546
ST ANGER 11439

PURE CLASSICS

BLISTER IN THE SUN	10069
CHISEL: KHE SANH	10286
ACDC: HELL'S BELLS	11069
ACDC: THUNDERSTRUCK	10531
ACDC: BACK IN BLACK	11064
ENTER SANDMAN	10154
BROWN EYED GIRL	10082
SMOKE ON THE WATER	10435
I WAS MADE FOR LOVING U	10248
HOTEL CALIFORNIA (SOLO)	10237
KEVIN.B.WILSON: STICKTHAT*PHONE	10458
L/KERNAGHAN: OUTBACK CLUB	11306
G&R: SWEET CHILD OF MINE	10475

FILM THEMES



EYE OF THE TIGER	10163
MISSION IMPOSSIBLE	10338
ACT A FOOL (2F2FURIOUS)	11325
JACKASS INTRO	11058
JACKASS: WE WANT FUN	11062
LORD OF THE RINGS	10986
BOND (TRADITIONAL)	10278
BEVERLY HILLS COP	10061
THE GODFATHER	10503
PINK PANTHER	10382
STAR WARS	10452
HARRY POTTER	10221
TERMINATOR THEME	10489

I fart in bed. 20389
I ♥ ME (but who wouldn't) 20676
100% BITCH 20270
EMINEM 20145
horny devil 20221
20276
20980
I'm Not A Bitch, I'm THE Bitch! 20441
Princess 20647
Devilish 20754
20247
20155
20567
Foxy 21280
Crazy Bitch 20305
20070
20644
20952
KickAss 20130
20030
20241
BITCH 20799
I ♥ DA PUNANI 21136
jackass 20795
Angel 20748
skanky 21293
Princess 20290
HOT 20282
HA,HA 20527
TOUCHA MY PHONE SMAPPA YOUR FACE 20527

LOGOS:

#1: PUNKS NOT DEAD 21302 21051 20345
#2: YOU ARE HERE 21051
#3: SEARCHING FOR BEER 20345

PICTURE MESSAGES

I ♥ U 30336
I WANT YOU TO STAY FAR, FAR AWAY FROM ME. 30410
You are DROP-DEAD gorgeous 30072
30159
30404
No No Just A KISS! 30411
How you doing? 30084
MATRIX 30350
don't mess with me 30057
30162
Talk To The Hand 30059
thinking of you... 30264
HA,HA 30347

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